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THERE ARE THOSE
OF US WHO WORK
WITHIN THE SYSTEM

②

THERE ARE THOSE
OF US WHO WORK
WITH THE SYSTEM

③

THERE ARE THOSE
OF US WHO CREATE
SYSTEMS

[* ARTISTS]

**DOCUMENTARY PROTOCOLS
PROTOCOLES DOCUMENTAIRES
(1967-1975)**

**DETAIL OF A PAGE FROM MICHAEL
MORRIS'S NOTEBOOK, 1975**
Morris/Trasov Archive
Courtesy of Michael Morris
and the Morris and Helen
Belkin Art Gallery
University of British Columbia,
Vancouver

**DÉTAIL D'UNE PAGE D'UN CAHIER
DE NOTES DE MICHAEL MORRIS, 1975**
Morris/Trasov Archive
Avec l'aimable permission de
Michael Morris et de la Morris
and Helen Belkin Art Gallery
Université de la Colombie-Britannique,
Vancouver

DOCUMENTARY PROTOCOLS PROTOCOLES DOCUMENTAIRES (1967-1975)

Edited by Vincent Bonin with the collaboration
of Michèle Thériault

Sous la direction de Vincent Bonin
avec la collaboration de Michèle Thériault

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EXHIBITING RESEARCH
MICHÈLE THÉRIAULT

Documentary Protocols (1967-1975) is the third part of a major project that took place over a three-year period, and that also included two exhibitions (*Documentary Protocols I* and *Documentary Protocols II*) presented at the Gallery in 2007 and 2008. This ambitious historical undertaking, conceived and developed by Vincent Bonin in response to an invitation from the Gallery, operates on many levels. It is an attempt to grasp and describe the interweaving of a *context* and *transition*, specifically with regard to the paradigm of self-determination in Canadian art that emerged in the mid-1960s; the transformation of artists into managers in their relationships with governmental structures and social programs developed at the same time; and the rupture that occurred in the mid-1970s between certain aesthetic positions and political objectives. In addition, the project draws on various archival holdings in a parallel attempt to construct a narrative out of documents attesting to the events and actions that shaped this context and transition. Finally, through the various stages of production, it reveals the archival document's role and function in its transitions, more or less difficult, from one resting place to another.

The publication *Documentary Protocols (1967-1975)*, and indeed the entire project associated with it, constitutes an exercise in the critical examination of the nature of curatorial work and research at the Gallery, as well as of their dissemination within the framework of the exhibition and the printed work. By questioning existing forms and contexts and examining the objects that give rise to this process, it has prompted, at various stages of the project's development, an enquiry into their meaning and modes of operation.

In this short introduction, one cannot delve sufficiently into the issues raised by this enterprise, which have particular relevance to the Gallery's intellectual objectives, specifically those questioning what, for the Gallery, constitutes a research project and its materialization. We hope to have the opportunity to address such questions in depth at a later date. At this point, we can, however, indicate possible avenues for discussion along two axes of investigation: research and its public display.

It is important to point out that this publication and the exhibitions that make up *Documentary Protocols* were developed in the wake of a recent widespread interest in documents and archival holdings and, one might say, a certain co-opting of these by the institutional apparatus of contemporary art. The issues associated with this fascination are

discussed, among others, in Vincent Bonin's essay, in relation to a series of major exhibitions focusing on archival documents that have taken place over the past ten years. One can undoubtedly add to his analysis the incessant process of commodification and the continual production of capital that is in operation here, but the phenomenon is complex. It combines an intense need to historicize with the increased accessibility that results from the speed with which information is being processed into databases. The status that the archival document now holds within the context of contemporary art is the subject of much debate, particularly in relation to the "shift" that its new status as an art object, among other things, brings about in the information it contains, the knowledge base to which it contributes, and its affiliation with the various contexts to which it belongs and with which it has been associated.

This project is different in that it does not address the document from the perspective of contemporary practices in art but uses it, rather, as material to make a narrative of a cultural, indeed political, moment in Canada by revealing a cultural transformation, a certain way of being and doing things. Moreover, through an almost excessive – but never random – accumulation of material within a given space, that of the exhibition and the book, the complexity of this state of affairs is allowed free rein and, through the juxtaposition of its various permutations, achieves a level of intelligibility. Another singular aspect of this project rests in the careful construction of a historical juncture through a meticulous and transversal reading of administrative documents that exist on the margins of artistic work; in short, of a body of neglected data. Although these documents have been reproduced in this book and placed in display cases in the exhibitions, these modes of graphic presentation and of display work against their commodification as art objects.

This is a paradoxical situation, however, since *Documentary Protocols* was made possible by the collaboration of an institution devoted to the study and exhibition of contemporary art. And it is precisely through this productive contradiction that a critical consideration of curating, research and exhibition practices proves fruitful for a gallery that is situated within a university-based framework of knowledge production and investigation. Let us now look at the directions that have been opened to examination by means of the axes mentioned above.

Documentary Protocols is the result of a process of intense and laborious research that began more than two years ago. Ten archival collections from various Canadian institutions were consulted. Because this

research was based on administrative documents from these holdings, it posed the question of what constitutes material for exhibition at the Gallery – and what are the parameters of a contemporary art exhibition? This research *became* an exhibition and, subsequently, a book. If artistic creation is often synonymous with research today, then what does the act of researching signify as it manifests itself in *Documentary Protocols*? How can it be defined in relation to the type of research that now seems to be an integral part of all present-day art practice? Moreover, giving the material obtained through this research a public form – as in the two exhibitions and the publication – proved complex, since the use of photocopies in the exhibition, for example, and of simple digital images in the publication, forced the lending institutions to address unconventional requests for the use of their holdings. In short, the process of consultation was open, but that of presentation was difficult. What is the status of a contemporary art establishment in relation to the institutional caretakers of archives? What role do archives play in research and its dissemination as they are critically debated in contemporary art, which questions, in turn, the whole of the archival apparatus?

In its public form of two exhibitions and a publication, this project, the outgrowth of in-depth research, has always remained research. In other words, within the transition to a public mode of display, every possible means was used to prevent the documentary evidence from functioning as illustration, and analysis as exegesis. In mounting the exhibitions and producing this book, the issue of how to exhibit research continually arose, and it remained an open question. How can a visitor or a reader be drawn into a project whose organizing principle is that of research? Certain strategies were adopted, including the presentation of a critical mass of documents (excess as a form of equilibrium) in display cases and binders on shelves along the wall, in order to convey the rise of this administrative sphere of influence that emerged along with its by-products. But this approach serves also to involve visitors in the sustained and repeated activity of consulting archives (re-search: to search anew and again). In addition, there is the question of how to avoid the nostalgic reconstruction of an era, the anachronism that is the prerogative of historical exhibitions. Could this be accomplished by privileging the document as a vehicle of information and by requiring visitors to be, first and foremost, readers of content? In this work of over four hundred pages, a similar critical mass is present, and the book's six case studies also engage us in in-depth investigations – information processing – that form irregular constellations to which others could be added. *Documentary Protocols* opens up innumerable pathways for analysis, and any exhibition

program that wishes to be critical has this end in sight. In the end, what of the document and its status in its “exhibited” form? A vehicle of information, surely; but is it not necessarily also an object of surplus value? And is it possible for an institution to avoid endowing an exhibited archival document with such a value?

This desire of the project's initiator that it take the shape of a “contemporary” exhibition and that it extend to a publication has also led us to consider curatorial work as a framework for new research strategies and ways of valorizing such activities. What does a mode of thinking that is “document-based” stand to gain from a deployment in the exhibition space, and what does the sphere of contemporary art gain by lending itself to such an exercise? One hopes that the knowledge that circulates from one place to another in this form will initiate a debate on the deployment of knowledge in a society where it has become a commodity.

Documentary Protocols constitutes a significant intellectual and material achievement and its production by the Gallery has contributed to enhancing its mission. This project represents a major contribution to our understanding of a transformation that was not only cultural but also societal and political, at a distinct turning point in Canadian history. To Vincent Bonin, its initiator, I offer my deepest appreciation for having shared with us his uncommon insight and breadth of thought. His commitment to research and his determination to convey a finely balanced and complex history of our artistic past through archives are exemplary. The authors Anne Bénichou, Marion Froger, Kristy A. Holmes, Primary Information, Felicity Tayler and David Tomas produced studies of great significance in every respect. Graphic designers Raphaël Daudelin (whose patience is boundless), Anouk Pennel and their assistant, Karine Cossette, of Studio Feed, worked tirelessly and with their customary subtlety to give this project, in three parts, its printed form.

My gratitude extends also to the Gallery staff, particularly Jo-Anne Balcaen, Marina Polosa and Paul Smith who have, in turn, managed parts of this project; they share equally in all aspects of its success. The Canada Council for the Arts has provided indispensable support for the production of *Documentary Protocols (1967-1975)* through its operations assistance program and particularly through its Supplementary Operating Funds Initiative (SOFI). Concordia University and the Ellen Gallery's Iris Westerberg Stern Fund and the Samuel Schecter Exhibitions Fund have made it possible for us to complete this publication.

FAIRE EXPOSITION DE LA RECHERCHE MICHÈLE THÉRIAULT

Protocoles documentaires (1967-1975) est le troisième volet d'un important projet qui s'est étalé sur trois ans et qui comportait aussi deux expositions (*Protocoles documentaires I* et *Protocoles documentaires II*) présentées à la Galerie en 2007 et 2008. Ce vaste projet historique, proposé et réalisé par Vincent Bonin à l'invitation de la Galerie, s'articule à plusieurs niveaux. Il est une tentative de saisir et de décrire l'imbrication d'un *contexte* et d'un *passage*, à savoir celui de l'essor du paradigme autogestionnaire dans le champ de l'art au Canada à partir du milieu des années 1960; celui de la transformation de l'artiste en gestionnaire dans ses rapports avec la structure gouvernementale et les programmes sociaux d'appui mis sur pied à l'époque; et celui d'une rupture au milieu des années 1970 entre différents partis pris esthétiques et visées politiques. En outre, il tire profit du contenu de divers fonds d'archives dans une tentative, en parallèle, de mise en récit à travers les documents attestant des faits et des gestes qui ont façonné ce contexte et ce passage. Finalement, à travers ses étapes de réalisation, il énonce une économie du document d'archives dans ses passages plus ou moins difficiles d'un « domicile » à l'autre.

La publication *Protocoles documentaires (1967-1975)*, voire l'ensemble du projet auquel elle se rattache, constitue un objet d'autocritique (autocritique en ce sens que la critique entraîne un questionnement non seulement des formes et des contextes existants, mais problématise aussi l'objet même qui donne lieu à l'autocritique) pour la Galerie, quant au travail de commissariat et de recherche, et sa diffusion dans le cadre de l'exposition et d'un ouvrage imprimé. Elle a fait éclore, à toutes les étapes, une réflexion sur leur définition, les modalités qui les animent et leur portée.

On ne peut, dans cette introduction, correctement approfondir les enjeux extrêmement pertinents à la visée intellectuelle de la Galerie – dans ce que constitue pour celle-ci un projet de recherche et sa mise en forme matérielle – soulevés par cette entreprise. Ceux-ci, nous espérons, feront l'objet d'une réflexion poussée à un autre moment. Par ailleurs, nous pouvons, ici même, lancer des pistes liées à ces deux axes : la recherche et sa mise en forme matérielle et publique.

Il nous faut d'abord préciser que cet ouvrage et les expositions qui composent *Protocoles documentaires* s'inscrivent dans la foulée d'une préoccupation pour le document et les archives, ou plutôt d'une certaine récupération de ces corpus par l'appareil institutionnel de l'art

contemporain. Les enjeux de cette préoccupation sont abordés, entre autres, dans l'essai de Vincent Bonin en rapport à une série de mises en exposition importante de documents d'archives au cours des dix dernières années. On ajouterait à son analyse, sans doute, l'infatigable machine de marchandisation et de production de capital qui est à l'œuvre ici, mais le phénomène est complexe : s'y croisent une pulsion historiciste et une accessibilité accrue dans le traitement croissant de l'information en banque de données. Un débat autour du statut du document d'archives accompagne sa nouvelle inscription dans l'espace de l'art actuel quant au « remaniement » que son nouveau statut en tant qu'objet d'art, entre autres, occasionne dans les renseignements qu'il comporte, le savoir auquel il participe et sa filiation dans les divers contextes auxquels il appartient et a été lié.

D'emblée, ce projet se détache des autres, car il ne traite pas du document dans l'optique des pratiques actuelles mais l'utilise plutôt comme substance pour mettre en récit une temporalité culturelle, voire politique, au Canada en faisant apparaître une transformation culturelle, une manière d'être et de faire. Par ailleurs, c'est dans son accumulation, presque excessive mais jamais aléatoire, dans un espace, celui de l'exposition *et* du livre, que la complexité de cet état des choses peut avoir libre cours et, dans la coexistence de ses diverses constellations, en arriver à une intelligibilité. Un autre aspect singulier de ce projet réside dans la construction soigneuse d'une conjoncture historique, dans la lecture méticuleuse et transversale de documents administratifs ou en périphérie de l'acte artistique, somme toute d'un ensemble d'informations laissées-pour-compte. Bien qu'ils soient reproduits dans cet ouvrage et mis sous vitrine dans les expositions, les modes de mise en pages et d'exposition résistent à une valorisation artistique du document.

Situation paradoxale cependant car *Protocoles documentaires* a pu voir le jour grâce à la collaboration d'une institution se consacrant à l'examen et à la mise en exposition de l'art actuel. Et c'est justement dans cette contradiction productive qu'une réflexion problématisée sur la recherche, le commissariat et l'exposition s'avère fructueuse pour une galerie qui s'inscrit dans un cadre universitaire de production du savoir et de son examen. Abordons maintenant ces pistes qui se sont ouvertes à nous selon les axes mentionnés ci-haut.

Protocoles documentaires a occasionné une activité intense et laborieuse de recherche étalée sur plus de deux ans. Dix fonds d'archives conservés dans diverses institutions au Canada ont été consultés. Parce qu'elle s'élaborait à partir de documents surtout administratifs tirés de ces fonds, cette recherche a soulevé la question de ce qui

constitue matière à exposition pour la Galerie; quels sont les paramètres d'une exposition d'art contemporain? Cette recherche est devenue exposition et ensuite ouvrage. Dans une conjoncture où la création artistique est maintenant devenue recherche, que signifie l'acte de recherche tel qu'il est a été élaboré et mis en œuvre dans *Protocoles documentaires*? Comment le définir par rapport à celui qui semble être partie prenante de toute pratique artistique aujourd'hui? Par ailleurs le processus de la mise en forme publique de la recherche, à savoir les deux expositions et l'ouvrage, s'est avéré complexe, car l'usage de photocopies dans l'exposition, par exemple, ou de simples numérisations dans la publication, a forcé les institutions qui possèdent ces fonds, à gérer des requêtes non conventionnelles d'usage de leur corpus. En somme ce fut une consultation ouverte mais une monstration difficile. Quel statut un centre d'art contemporain occupe-t-il par rapport à ces propriétaires d'archives? Comment les archives s'inscrivent-elles dans la recherche et la diffusion qui relèvent d'un débat d'ordre critique dans l'art contemporain et qui remet en question l'appareil archivistique?

Ce projet, fruit d'une recherche approfondie, dans sa forme publique soit les deux expositions et la publication, est toujours demeuré recherche. C'est dire que dans son passage à la présentation publique tout a été mis en œuvre pour entraver une transformation des « témoins » en illustration et l'analyse, en exégèse. Dans le montage des expositions et à la réalisation de l'ouvrage, la question s'est incessamment posée et est demeurée ouverte : Comment faire exposition de la recherche? Comment entraîner le visiteur et le lecteur dans un mode dont l'économie est celle de la recherche? Certaines stratégies ont été adoptées telles que de présenter une masse critique de documents – un excès comme équilibre –, dans une suite de vitrines et dans des cartables posés sur des tablettes au mur pour, bien sûr, communiquer l'essor de cette mouvance administrative qui prenait forme et de ses retombées, mais aussi pour faire participer le visiteur à l'activité soutenue et répétée de la consultation des archives (recherche : chercher à nouveau et encore). Par ailleurs, comment éviter la reconstruction nostalgique d'une époque, l'anachronisme qui est l'apanage des expositions historiques? Peut-être en privilégiant le document comme véhicule d'information et en exigeant du visiteur qu'il soit avant tout lecteur de contenu? Dans cet ouvrage de plus de quatre cents pages, cette masse critique y est aussi présente, et les six études de cas nous plongent elles aussi dans des analyses – des traitements de l'information – profondes qui forment des constellations irrégulières et auxquelles d'autres pourraient se joindre. *Protocoles documentaires* possède la caractéristique d'ouvrir d'innombrables autres pistes d'analyse et c'est justement

ce vers quoi tend un programme d'expositions qui se veut critique. Enfin, qu'en est-il du document et de son statut dans sa forme « exposée »? Véhicule d'information, sûrement; mais ne fait-il pas nécessairement l'objet d'un surcroît de valeur et est-il possible pour une institution de contourner une telle valorisation?

Ce désir du concepteur du projet que son initiative se manifeste sous la forme d'une exposition « contemporaine » et qu'elle se poursuive dans une publication nous a aussi fait réfléchir sur le travail curatorial comme cadre pour de nouvelles stratégies de recherche et de mise en valeur des actes qu'elle suscite. Que gagne la réflexion « documentaire » dans son déploiement dans l'espace d'exposition et que gagne l'espace d'art contemporain en se prêtant à un tel exercice? On ose espérer que le savoir qui circule ainsi d'un lieu à l'autre et que sa nouvelle mise en forme initient un débat sur l'économie du savoir dans une société où le savoir est devenu marchandise.

Protocoles documentaires représente une somme matérielle et intellectuelle d'une richesse considérable et sa réalisation à la Galerie a contribué à son épanouissement. Ce projet est un apport important à la compréhension d'une transformation non seulement culturelle mais sociétale et politique à une époque charnière de notre histoire. Que son concepteur Vincent Bonin reçoive ici mon appréciation profonde pour avoir partagé avec nous la perspicacité et l'envergure d'une pensée hors du commun. Son engagement envers la recherche et son acharnement à vouloir communiquer une histoire nuancée et complexe de notre passé artistique à travers les archives sont exemplaires. Les auteurs Anne Bénichou, Marion Froger, Kristy A. Holmes, Primary Information, Felicity Tayler et David Tomas ont produit des études dont l'apport est substantiel sur tous les plans. Les graphistes Raphaël Daudelin (dont la patience est inestimable), Anouk Pennel et leur assistante Karine Cossette du Studio Feed ont laborieusement et avec finesse travaillé à la mise en espace de ce projet en trois temps, dans sa forme imprimée.

Mes remerciements s'adressent aussi au personnel de la Galerie et en particulier à Jo-Anne Balcaen, Marina Polosa et Paul Smith qui ont, tour à tour, assuré le relais de la gestion de ce projet et partagent en tout point le succès de sa mise en forme. Le Conseil des Arts du Canada a apporté un appui indispensable à la réalisation de *Protocoles documentaires (1967-1975)* de par son programme d'aide au fonctionnement et particulièrement de par son Initiative de suppléments au fonctionnement (INSUF). L'Université Concordia, le Fonds Iris Westerberg Stern et le Fonds Samuel Schecter pour les expositions, nous auront permis de mener à terme cet ouvrage.



DOCUMENTARY PROTOCOLS I — AUGUST 30 - OCTOBER 6, 2007
 PROTOCOLES DOCUMENTAIRES I — 30 AOÛT - 6 OCTOBRE 2007



DOCUMENTARY PROTOCOLS II — MAY 3 - JUNE 14, 2008
 PROTOCOLES DOCUMENTAIRES II — 3 MAI - 14 JUIN 2008

**DOCUMENTARY
PROTOCOLS
(1967-1975)**

VINCENT
BONIN

In the mid-1960s, Canadian artists suffered from cultural isolation as museums were indifferent to their work and the international art market seemed beyond reach. Artists made up for this state of exclusion by creating alternative spaces in which they could present experimental work and offer services to members of their communities. Parallel to accomplishing the tasks required for the consolidation of an institutional existence, these artists' groups created a postal communication network with their peers, and used portable video technology to bypass audiovisual monopolies. The Canada Council for the Arts adapted to these burgeoning practices by developing ad hoc programmes.

Aside from the booklets, bulletins, and other publicity vehicles produced by the artists themselves,¹ the critical fortune pertaining to the activities of such alternative spaces was limited to exhibition reviews in the 1970s. During the 1980s and '90s, a few monographs were published to commemorate the longevity of some of these organisations. Such publications were a pretext to make use of a given artist-run structure's archival fonds and to record comments from its incipient protagonists.² Throughout the same period, master's theses were written in the form of case studies.³

Artists have also authored histories of the institutions they created. In 1987, AA Bronson, a founding member of the General Idea collective, edited *From Sea to Shining Sea*, which was published in conjunction with an exhibition held at the Power Plant (Toronto) that Bronson curated.⁴ *From Sea to Shining Sea* contains a chronology that lists in detail the seminal events surrounding the genesis of these structures. It is the only monograph that casts a backward, pan-Canadian glance at the emergence of this paradigm of self-determination in the field of art since its inception.

Documentary Protocols does not make up for the lack of a comprehensive study on the evolution of this paradigm from the 1960s to the present day. In fact, this project addresses a historical moment – a parenthesis of sorts – in which the passage of the capitalist economy to the tertiary sector converges with a redefinition of the status of artists. This parenthesis opens with the incorporation of the Intermedia Society (1967) – which was the first multidisciplinary cooperative to receive funding from the Canada Council for the Arts – and closes in 1975 with the talks held between representatives of seventeen organizations whose outcome was the creation of the Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centres (ANNPAC) the following year. The founding of ANNPAC facilitated the equitable distribution of

grants and afforded artists access to lobbying tools to reach government agencies more efficiently. However, it fused the decentralized network that artists imagined in the early 1970s to the bureaucratic machine they were attempting to bypass. The second half of the decade also coincided with the resurgence of figurative expressionism in painting and the return of the white cube as the dominant display apparatus. Ultimately, the mutability of subjects in countercultural movements of the 1960s gave rise to debates pertaining to the representation of sexual difference alongside questions of class and ethnicity. *Documentary Protocols* challenges the widespread belief that the emergence of this paradigm of self-determination represents an experimental moment out of which the infrastructure of current artist-run centres sprang. It takes into account a fundamental break that occurred in the mid-1970s, which opposed different aesthetic positions and political programs.

Some of the organisations born during this crucial period disbanded (General Idea, Image Bank, the Intermedia Society, N.E. Thing Co., Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.), while others have survived, despite changes in their mandates and the resignation of members (the Western Front Society, A Space). As a corollary to this state of affairs, individuals with differing ideological views were united under a common corporate name. However, the historical trajectory of these organizations can be observed in their archival fonds, where the results of partially realized utopias exist alongside material evidence of the artists' labour.

The sampling of documents that follows this essay bears witness to such a temporality, albeit in an oblique manner. It is divided into sections that focus on artist-run structures or collectives incorporated between 1967 and 1975, whose archives are now accessible in public museums or universities (A Space, General Idea, Image Bank, the Intermedia Society, N.E. Thing Co., Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., Vidéographe, the Western Front Society).

It has been sequenced chronologically based on the principle that a narrative emerges from the succession of grant applications submitted, letters exchanged, forms filled and disseminated, etc. Yet it is necessary to take into account the historicity of the archival fonds themselves while constructing this narrative.

Inspired partly by the study of manuscripts, some anthropologists and historians whose work is linked to the field of material culture have employed the heuristic metaphor of a "biography" of objects in

1 For an analysis of the role played by the protocol of publishing within artist-run structures during this period, see in this publication the essay by Felicity Tayler, "Publishing as Alternative Space".

2 *Whispered Art History: Twenty Years at the Western Front*, ed. Keith Wallace (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1993); *The 25th Anniversary Project* (Toronto: A Space, 1996).

3 Diana Nemiroff, "A History of Artists-Run Spaces in Canada with Particular Reference to Véhicule, A Space and the Western Front," (M.A. thesis, Concordia University, 1985); Gail Tuttle, "The Intermedia Society (1967-1972) and Early Vancouver Performance Art," (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1994).

4 *From Sea to Shining Sea: Artist-initiated Activity in Canada, 1939-1987*, ed. AA Bronson, in collaboration with René Blouin, Peggy Gale, and Glenn Lewis, (Toronto: Power Plant, 1987).

view of exposing the displacement of artefacts from one context to another as well as their shift in value. When applied to the analysis of archives, such an approach determines to what extent fonds not only constitute receptacles of information, but that they also have their own trajectory,⁵ which is comprised of a complex interweaving of various practices and agents (the texts' authors, the right holders, etc.).

During the first part of the 1980s, artist-run structures' fonds were in a dormant state; moreover, they were at risk due to inadequate storage conditions. It was during the next decade that several of these artist groups bestowed their archives to public museums and other heritage preservation societies. Were it not for this "house arrest," these documents would not be accessible. Certain fonds have been spared the fate of accidental dispersion,⁶ while others were acquired after a process of negotiation with the artists or their estates.

Documentary Protocols encompasses several modes of enunciation within a single series of utterances. The project's title refers to artists' use of documents to represent their agency in the society of the 1960s and '70s. It also refers to speech acts legitimating the administrative existence of self-run structures or collectives. Moreover, it designates the actions of various individuals and institutions who have become the trustees of the archives of these organisations in the hope of making their material existence perennial.

The continuity between the project's three parts is inflected by this set of contingent events, which we will partially reconstruct here, both to account for the institutions containing traces of this seminal movement and to address the limitations of their dissemination.

EXHIBITIONS, PUBLICATION

It is necessary to distinguish this project from a considerable number of exhibitions and publications conceived around the concept of the "archive" since the mid-1990s.⁷ In such projects, curators examine, amongst other issues, the way artists are rerouting their practice's documentary by-products. The imprecise use of the term "archive," which is never written in its plural form, echoes the methodological shortcomings of such curatorial propositions, which have become a heterogeneous accumulation of objects and discourses. Related themes – such as collection, memory, sampling, etc. – complement these attempts to assemble works that are often of unequal measure. The theoretical foundations of such themes can be found in the works

of authors associated with "French Theory" whose books have been translated into English, particularly Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* and Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*.

In the wake of this phenomenon, a series of exhibitions that have taken place since *documenta 11* (Kassel, 2002) attempted to broaden the definition of documentary. Whereas this genre once functioned within a precise rhetorical field, it has now become a hybrid in light of its crossover with several disciplines and media.⁸

At the same time, other curators have tried to conceive an interpretative apparatus around practices that emerged in the 1960s and '70s and whose manifestations are above all event-related. Their projects have striven to address questions that remain at the periphery of the production of artworks per se and have re-evaluated, for instance, the conceptual underpinnings of particular exhibitions, festivals, or publications of the era.⁹ Since, in this particular context, the historical narration of these practices often does away with art objects, audio-visual or textual archives allow one to refer to an absent context and the role played by diverse protagonists.

These hybrid approaches to exhibition curating are contested by several commentators who still consider artworks as autonomous entities presented in ideal conditions of visibility.¹⁰ As for exegesis, they claim, it ought to be relegated to the exhibition catalogue. Such residual modernism substitutes an institutional shaping of spectatorial expectations for the Greenbergian concept of medium specificity.

The cinema, reading room, art galleries, and publication templates produce mutually exclusive modes of perception. To locate their zones of contact necessarily threatens to annihilate the very intelligibility of the content that each of these entities transmits in normal circumstances.

However, decompartmentalization is not in itself an innovative strategy, for certain curators working in that vein have recycled, in a banal fashion, the didacticism of museums, thereby reinstating the sobering discourse of documentary in exhibition spaces.¹¹

Contrary to projects based on the presentation of photographic images or video, *Documentary Protocols* brings together mainly textual by-products of artistic and administrative activities. It would therefore have been possible to by-pass the actual display of the documents by presenting them directly in the publication. However, the

5 John Randolph adopts this methodology to study the Bakunin family archives, which are preserved in the Pushkin house (Saint Petersburg, Russia). The "biography" of these archives, from the end of the nineteenth century to their definitive institutionalization, has been generally ignored by historians. See "On the Biography of the Bakunin Family Archive" in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 209–31.

6 After the disbanding of Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., the organisation's archives were temporarily threatened. Nancy Marrelli, head of the Concordia University Archives and witness of the rise of artist-run structures, acquired them and they are now permanently housed at Concordia.

7 *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing, and Archiving in Art*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen (Munich: Prestel, 1998); *Interarchive: Archivarisches Praktiken und Handlungsräume im Zeitgenössischen Kunstfeld = Archival Practices and Sites in the Contemporary Art Field* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002); *Lost in the Archives*, ed. Rebecca Comay and John Knechtel (Toronto: Alphabet City, 2002); *Potential: Ongoing Archive*, ed. Anna Harding (Amsterdam / Southampton: Artimo / John Hansard Gallery, 2002); Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 3–22; *Les artistes contemporains et l'archive: interrogation sur le sens du temps et de la mémoire à l'ère de la numérisation / Contemporary Artists and Archives: On the Meaning of Time and Memory in the Digital Age* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004); *Ghosting: The Role of the Archive within Contemporary Artists' Film and Video*, ed. Josephine Lanyon and Jane Connarty (Bristol: Picture This, 2006); *The Archive*, ed. Charles Merewether (London / Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel / MIT Press, 2006); *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, ed. Okui Enwezor (New York: International Center of Photography, Steidl, 2008).

8 On this subject, see *The Need to Document*, ed. Vit Havranek, Sabine Schaschl-Cooper, and Bettina Steinbrügge (Zurich, JRP / Ringier, 2005); *The Greenroom: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art*, ed. Maria Lind and Hito Steyerl (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008).

9 Among others, the exhibition *Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Art Movement*, NYC (1996) belongs in this category. It was organised by the artist and curator Julie Ault at the Drawing Center. *Cultural Economies* addresses the rise of artist-run structures in New York between 1965 and 1985. See *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

10 Tom Holert has reflected on the overabundance of documentary images presented at *documenta 11*. The event's curators multiplied strategies to encourage the spectator's mobility in front of works usually shown in cinema settings. According to Holert, enticing the viewer to apprehend images in a distracted manner is to accelerate their integration within a logic of the spectacle. See Tom Holert, "The Apparition of the Documentary," in *Documentary Now! Contemporary Strategies in Photography, Film and the Visual Arts* (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2005).

11 Bill Nichols posits that the documentary genre is underpinned by this discourse on sobriety in which content is formatted according to the horizons of the expectations of certain target groups. See Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts of Documentary* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991). Concerning the formatting of archives, also see Martin Beck, "On Formatting History (Stored and Exhibited)," in Julie Ault and Martin Beck, *Critical Condition: Ausgewählte Texte Im Dialog* (Essen: Kokerei Zollverein, 2003), 248–66.

university art gallery has proven to be one of the least constraining sites in which to effect the mediation of these materials.

Jacques Derrida has noted that a museum's reinvestment of a private fonds seals the latter's dependence on the proper name of a physical individual or institutional body.¹² However, such a signifier absorbs the "archives of others." Bringing together documents stemming from various related fonds undermines a given archive's institutional "house arrest." Such an act creates a mediating structure which reassembles traces of varying provenance that are nonetheless linked to contiguous processes.¹³ During the first two phases of the project, the Gallery became a third space that shed light on such discursive configurations. For a limited time, documents cohabited metaphorically between their original recipients' addresses and those of the sites that now preserve them.

However, to conceive an exhibition is to face the very limits of the utopia in which there is a neutral access point to information. Henri Lefebvre posits that the social function of space is always determined by the gap between the ideological parameters that define it and the contingent uses it promotes.¹⁴ Thus, the white cube is not confined to the virgin surfaces of the gallery's walls. The architectural framework itself must also reproduce the humidity and temperature conditions of the vaults in which documents and works are stored.¹⁵ To obtain permission to borrow objects from public collections, a gallery must have a category "A" status granted by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board.¹⁶

Conversely, according to our experience, procedures for managing loan requests vary considerably from one institution to another.

Among lending institutions, the National Gallery of Canada imposed the strictest parameters. Each set of documents arrived in custom-built crates, and included protective, archival cardboard to prevent direct contact with the display cases. Some of the more fragile pieces were submitted to restoration committees in order to determine if they could leave the vaults. Despite such administrative red tape, most loan requests were accepted. The University of British Columbia's Rare Book and Special Collections library, however, did not allow archival items from the Intermedia Society and Western Front Society fonds to leave their premises under the pretext that the institution does not currently have a loan policy.¹⁷ Therefore, the content of the display cases dedicated to these two Vancouver-based organisations consisted solely of documents from the personal archives of some of

the cooperatives' ex-members (Victor Doray, Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov). Visitors could, however, consult photocopies of documents housed at the University of British Columbia.

The organisation of the two exhibitions would not have been possible without the generosity of Vincent Trasov and Michael Morris, whose fonds are on long-term loan to the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery (Vancouver). Keen on having these materials properly disseminated, they provided us with considerable leeway with respect to both the number of documents obtained and the manner in which they could be displayed.

A liminal space between the institution and the public, the display case superimposes a desire for communicational transparency and the fetishism of relics. It thereby sutures the illusion of being historically exhaustive, while conferring an added use value on artefacts. In contrast to artworks that only migrate from a gallery's vaults to its exhibition space, the tactile experience of archives becomes possible within the reading room. However, the act of reading is determined by a number of rules which thereby transform it into a ritual replete with meaning that anchors the text in the materiality of its carrier.

It would not have been conceivable to organize these exhibitions without creating friction between the museological mediation of documents and the latter's accessibility as research materials.

One strategy that was abandoned along the way consisted in creating distinct consultation and display spaces. Parts I and II of *Documentary Protocols* in fact fused the logic of these two functions, which the Gallery usually keeps separate by segregating an ad hoc documentation area in which pertinent materials are available for consultation (catalogues, press clippings, etc.).

The items in display cases were accompanied by leaflets containing a didactic commentary, list of documents, and bibliographic references. A sampling of photocopied documents was made available in large quantities. Deprived of any interpretive framework, these photocopies foregrounded the archives' information content.¹⁸

The exhibition's first part presented these photocopies in binders placed on pedestals installed in the centre of the space where visitors could circulate freely, whereas the display cases were placed against the Gallery's walls. For the second part this strategy was reversed: the photocopies were made available on small shelves fastened to the

¹² As an example of this "house arrest" of archives, Derrida refers to the transformation of Freud's last dwelling into a museum. See Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹³ The General Idea fonds thus contains some of the correspondence sent by Image Bank, and the Morris/Trasov Archive brings together letters received from the Toronto collective.

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

¹⁵ This injunction excludes de facto artist-run centres as spaces for the showing of artefacts stemming from their own heritage.

¹⁶ See the following link on Heritage Canada's website (accessed by the author on 25 July 2009): [http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/bcm-mcp/dsgntn/index-fra.cfm#a1]

¹⁷ Nonetheless, the archive's acquisition file contained documents pertaining to a loan that had been granted to Art Metropole (Toronto) in 1995 for an exhibition entitled *The Intermedia Society*, which was organised by AA Bronson that same year.

¹⁸ This strategy also exposed the research materials that the curator accumulated but excluded from the discourse of the exhibition.

walls around a series of display cases that occupied the centre of a large, rectangular space. Each shelf corresponded to one year in the leaflet's chronology and brought together documents selected from all of the fonds consulted.

These photocopies were obtained and exhibited by virtue of a clause in the Canadian copyright law stipulating that researchers have the right to obtain such copies for private use.¹⁹ However, the clause does not contain restrictions concerning the public presentation of such materials. A request and the payment of modest fees thereby allowed us to display these materials, if only temporarily.

To oversee the migration of archival documents into printed form is to deal with a set of protocols that have no common measure with the complex act of physically displacing them from one institution to another.

As a general rule, artefacts circulate free of charge between institutions endowed with an "A" status. However, this is hardly the case when it comes to digitizing them. The Gallery thus spent an important part of the project's budget in reproduction fees. As noted above with respect to the borrowing of documents, in our experience, such fees vary considerably and seem to be attributed in an arbitrary manner.²⁰ Generally speaking, they procure token revenues when compared to a given institution's annual budget at the expense of the work of researchers, which justifies the attribution of public funds to preserve this heritage and to make it accessible.

According to Terry Cook, archives bear the traces of "governmentality," and not only those of the "government that governs." They can thus be part of the daily activities of all citizens without being restricted to the sole use of the elected party.²¹ As for John Frow, he posits that the aporia of information understood both as gift and commodity overdetermines its modes of circulation:

In order to work efficiently and fairly, any market relies on 'perfect information' - information that is 'free, complete, instantaneous, and universally available; At the same time ... the *actual* market structure of contemporary society depends on information itself being a commodity - costly, partial and deliberately restricted in its availability ...²²

Archives move through such an economic infrastructure in which the functions of various mediators are circumscribed according to

the interventions they must carry out on the same materials. Far from the myth that assigns them the role of custodians and purveyors of memory, archivists are in fact "conveyors" in a chain of production where access to collective heritage becomes a service transaction.

Researchers are also part of this circuit, for they transform archives into source material, out of which they generate a surplus value of intelligibility.

When they consult a fonds for the very first time, researchers entertain the illusion that they are exploring uncharted intellectual territory. Their labour in selecting materials evacuates the complex materiality from the documents they choose and ultimately reduces them to a written component, which is soluble in the narrative threads of exegesis.²³ According to Brien Brothman, footnote or end-note references consolidate this discursive segregation:

... The footnotes are the result of the author's operation of an *uncategorical* exclusion, apparently discouraging or repressing always half-heartedly and with limited success, and interruption, a diversion from another perhaps less, perhaps more important story.²⁴

The editorial structure of this publication attempts to undermine these discursive hierarchies by providing equal visibility both to the sampling of documents, be they digitized or transcribed, from archival fonds, and to the case studies based on the close reading of these items.²⁵

The term "address" not only designates the headquarters of an institution but also the act of identifying the addressees in communicational events ("to address oneself to someone"). The following commentary attempts to inflect the writing of history by recognizing effects of this "translation" (both spatial and linguistic) of these documents from one address to another.²⁶

INFORMATION

Between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, Conceptual and Fluxus artists attributed an intrinsic social value to the concept of information. Although they did not always espouse the same critical viewpoints, this concept linked their respective practices to a shared project of democratization. As Eve Meltzer notes, this period's technological imaginary encouraged artists to "reprogram" media according to an

19 Canada: Copyright (Exception Education Libraries Archives Museums), Regulations, (CP. 1999-1351), 28 July 1999. *Gazette of Canada, Part II*, 133, no. 17 (18 August 1999).

20 PrayBober from the College Art Association has reflected on the adverse effect that the sudden rise of such fees has had on research in art history. See PrayBober, "Statement Regarding a National Policy on Granting of Reproduction Rights in Art-Historical Publishing," (accessed by the author 25 July 2009) [http://www.collegeart.org/guidelines/reprorights.html].

21 Terry Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," *Archival Science*, 1, no. 1 (2001): 3-24.

22 John Frow, "Information as Gift and Commodity," *New Left Review* 1, no. 129 (September-October 1996): 102. Frow cites Herbert I. Shiller and Anita R. Shiller, "Libraries, Public Access to Information and Commerce," in *The Political Economy of Information*, ed. Vincent Mosco and Janet Wasco, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 159-60.

23 On the appropriation of archives by historians, see Joseph Morsel, "Les sources sont-elles le pain de l'historien?" *Hypothèses* 1 (2003): 271-86.

24 Brien Brothman, "The Limits of Limits: Derridean Deconstruction and the Archival Institution," *Archivaria* 36 (Fall 1993): 205-20.

25 Each author was given a photocopy of a relevant portion of the sampling. Some of them also added other items to this documentation gathered during previous research.

26 The question of translation can also be posed here in pragmatic terms, for budget constraints did not allow us to publish bilingual versions of all of the texts in this publication.

emancipatory, and indeed political, agenda.²⁷ Correlatively, artists attempted to make the activities of exhibiting and publishing coextensive by short-circuiting a network of third parties (critics, curators, art dealers) responsible for the migration of aesthetic experience into discourse.²⁸

Nevertheless, some of these mediators endorsed this process of decompartmentalization, if only a posteriori. In 1969, American critic Lucy Lippard gave a talk at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (Halifax) entitled "Toward a Dematerialized or Non Object Art," in which she postulated that the dissemination of conceptual art in the form of documentation was bound to undermine the logic of the market.²⁹

Later, in the postscript to *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object*, Lippard acknowledged the failure that was always already programmed within the utopia she had advocated while ignoring conceptual art's exceptional ability to be absorbed into the market.³⁰ By the mid-1960s, artists began to reconcile the idea of information as a free resource with its existence as a commodity subject to the laws of intellectual property. Many representatives of the conceptual art scene relied on other sources of income (teaching, among others);³¹ thus, they remained fairly distant from the speculative dimensions of the capitalist system. This was the case with Canadian artists, whose survival depended to a large extent on government grants and on the exchange of services between peers, which gave rise to contractual relations that will be addressed below. For the time being, an aside is necessary in order to circumscribe the protocols that allowed American and European artists to insert their propositions within the logic of the market while undermining restrictive definitions of the concept of authorship. Recent reappraisals of this period have addressed the questions that arise when a notarized act overdetermines the intermittent performativity of artworks.

Didier Semin has analyzed Yves Klein's strategy whereby aesthetic procedures need to be patented, for their value no longer rests on an "autographic" index (the hand of the artist).³² Semin's essay largely exceeds the case of Klein alone, for it addresses other examples in which operations executed by a third party replace this index. However, the most exhaustive publication on the subject is Maria Eichhorn's *The Artist's Contract*. Eichhorn's undertaking is the result of a project begun in 1997 that seeks to examine the contract devised by Seth Siegelaub and lawyer Robert Projansky (*The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, 1971). This document stipulates that artists are to receive at least 15% of the surplus value of a given

work in the event that it is resold, and contains clauses pertaining to the protection of its material integrity.³³

Eichhorn interviewed several key figures in the American and European art world of the 1960s and 1970s to determine how each individual made use of this document. These discussions throw into sharp focus the ambivalent and sometimes antagonistic relationship artists had with the art market and institutions.³⁴

In a 1989 article written for the catalogue of the exhibition *L'art conceptuel: une perspective*, Benjamin Buchloh equates the political failure of conceptualism to artists' use of notarized procedures to determine the intellectual and market value of their works.³⁵ According to Buchloh, this proliferation of certificates and other tautological speech acts set the stage for an "aesthetics of administration" that co-opts the dominant episteme of late capitalism. Buchloh mentions Robert Morris's *Document (Statement of Aesthetic Withdrawal)* (1963) as an example of this phenomenon of mimicry. Morris hired a notary to obliterate the legal existence of a previous work (*Litanies*) that was in the possession of architect Phillip Johnson and which the artist believed to have lost its aesthetic content. According to Buchloh, Morris's proposition, as well as those by Yves Klein (especially the patents), are to be read in light of the immediate and inviolable validation effect a juridical framework can afford. As a counter example, he refers to the site-specific projects of Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Daniel Buren, and Marcel Broodthaers, whose irony "turned the violence of that mimetic relationship back onto the ideological apparatus itself" and set the theoretical framework for a "critique of institutions." However, Buchloh conflates the verb "to administer," which can function in various contexts without explicit reference to capitalism's modes of reproduction, and Theodor Adorno's postulate of a "totally administered"³⁶ cultural sphere.

In principle, the performance of a service does not outlive the context in which it was originally requested. Sidestepping this fact, an approach adopted recently by some theorists tends to emphasize metaphorical representations of labour in art's visible perimeter, while neglecting the documentary evidence produced by artists when they fulfil the role of administrators.

For instance, Helen Molesworth compares the paradigmatic shift of minimalist and conceptual practices to the industrial era's transition towards the tertiary sector and, as an example, she ascribes a heuristic function to the rubric "process art" in order to problematize accepted

²⁷ See Eve Meltzer, "The Dream of the Information World," *Oxford Art Journal* 29, no. 1 (2006): 115-138.

²⁸ Curator Catherine Moseley posits that the material form of conceptual work distinguishes itself from the traditional art object not by virtue of its ephemerality, but because it relies on a documentary infrastructure. See: *Conception. Conceptual Documents 1968 to 1972*, ed. Catherine Moseley, (Norwich: Norwich Gallery, Norwich School of Art and Design, 2001).

²⁹ Lucy Lippard, "Toward a Dematerialized or Non Object Art," transcription of the conference delivered on 29 November 1969 at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax. Art Metro-pole fonds, Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada.

³⁰ Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972...*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997, 1973), 263.

³¹ On art education in the United States during the 1960s and '70s, see: Judith Adler, *Artists in Offices: An Ethnography of an Academic Art Scene* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979).

³² Didier Semin, *Le Peintre et son modèle déposé* (Geneva: Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, 2001).

³³ Maria Eichhorn, *The Artist's Contract: Interviews with Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Paula Cooper, Hans Haacke, Jenny Holzer, Adrian Piper, Robert Projansky, Robert Ryman, Seth Siegelaub, John Weber, Lawrence Weiner, Jackie Windsor* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2009).

³⁴ In contrast, Daniel Buren describes the coercive effects of his "warning," which outlined obligations between the collector and the artist instead of positing the usual incentive of respecting an agreement. In the case of a breach in the contract, the work is no longer attributed to Buren. "Daniel Buren," *ibid.*, 86-117.

³⁵ Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "From the Aesthetic of Administration to Institutional Critique (Some Aspects of Conceptual Art 1962-1969)" in *L'art conceptuel: une perspective* (Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1990): 25-39. Another version was published under the title "Conceptual Art: 1962-1965: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October*, vol. 55 (Winter 1990): 105-143.

³⁶ See: Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London, Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1984). Although he does not cite Buchloh's article, Clive Robertson comments on the focus given by American and British historians of conceptual art on this cul-de-sac of administrative aesthetics which conceals the intermediate strategy – especially adopted in Canada – of creating new institutions. See: Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administration of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2006), 2.

definitions of intellectual and manual labour.³⁷ For his part, John Roberts attempts to measure the gap that separates the division of tasks within the capitalist system from collective undertakings between artists. He notes that workers who cooperate are united by the collective intellect of the production machine, but cease to exist as individuals. In contrast, members of artists' groups do not lose their identity and they produce complex representations of labour.³⁸ Molesworth's and Robert's analyses fail to determine, however, to what extent these representations are absorbed later on by the market under the rubric of by-products. Such a shift corresponds to what Diedrich Diederichsen has described as a "metaphysical index": i.e., the surplus value that is added by virtue of artists' living labour.³⁹

The archival fonds of artist-run centres bear witness to a contiguity between the administrative protocols required for the consolidation of an institutional structure and the dialogical dimension of collaborative processes. A close reading of their content allows one to understand the interstice in which the visible and invisible portions of this metaphysical index are negotiated. However, these documents should not be regarded as a material more neutral than artworks – they too succumb to the logic of fetishism. To interpret them requires one to make use of a method that circumvents the speculative discourse that produces relics, while moving beyond the restrictive notion of the source.

Certain sociologists have attempted to circumscribe instances of a residual subjectivity in transactions between citizens and institutions. Parallel to field work, they consult the archival fonds of corporations in order to study the discrete manifestations of "ordinary writing" resulting from the injunctions of professional frameworks.⁴⁰ Rather than restricting these texts to predictable answers, they bring to the fore their latent reflexivity.⁴¹

Inspired by these analytical models, we will begin by addressing the ways in which artistic practices intersect with the division of tasks necessary to establish a paradigm of self-determination in the field of Canadian art in the 1960s and 1970s. We will then comment on the parallels between strategies adopted by artists to create new platforms for information exchange and the programs aiming to decentralize culture initiated by the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Finally, after a reappraisal of failed countercultural utopias of the second half of the 1970s, we will discuss the condition of "house arrest" under which the archival fonds of artists' collectives exist within the museological apparatus.

37 Helen Molesworth, "Work Ethic," in *Work Ethic*, ed. Helen Molesworth (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art; University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

38 John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade* (London, New York: Verso, 2007), 125.

39 Diedrich Diederichsen, *On (Surplus) Value in Art*, *Reflexions* 1 (Sternberg Press, 2008), 42–43.

40 See: *Écritures ordinaires*, ed. Daniel Fabre (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou; P.O.L., 1993); Jean-François Laë, *Les nuits de la main courante, Écritures au travail* (Paris: Stock, 2008); and "L'archive personnelle, la grande oubliée," *Sociologie et société* 40, no. 2 (Fall 2008).

41 Although unrelated to this practice, the works of Delphine Gardey provide an updated social history of information technology by analysing the functions and usage of bureaucratic tools prior to the introduction of computers. Gardey is particularly interested in how certain "techno-human" complexes are used to govern business as much as the State. See: Delphine Gardey, *Écrire, calculer, classer. Comment une révolution de papier a transformé les sociétés contemporaines (1800-1940)* (Paris: La Découverte, Collection "Textes à l'appui", Anthropologie des sciences, 2008).

INCORPORATIONS

The fictitious company N.E. Thing Co., created in 1966 by Iain and Ingrid Baxter, has been neglected by recent re-evaluations of conceptualism.⁴² However, it represents a middle-ground between the "aesthetics of administration" and the "critique of institutions" opposed by Buchloh.⁴³

In 1969, the year N.E. Thing Co. was incorporated, curator and art dealer Seth Siegelaub compared the company's eleven departments to an intellectual partitioning of operations which, in normal circumstances, would be linked together as a fluid whole in the work of an artist.⁴⁴ Many of these departments mimicked mediating functions in the field of art. The ACT and ART departments appeared as substitutes for the process of evaluation pertaining to criticism. They produced certificates that conferred an aesthetic value onto objects, events, or gestures (*aesthetically considered thing*), or, on the contrary, rejected such conceptual or material entities from the consecrated sphere of aesthetics (*aesthetically rejected thing*). The printing department produced art catalogues and promotional booklets. The photography department gave shape and a perennial existence to some of the collective's interventions, which were ephemeral by nature.

By means of an act of delegation whose consequences have been underestimated, N.E. Thing Co. asked graphic designer Allan Fleming to design the company's logotype. This gesture may seem banal, if only because it is common practice, but the strategy to entrust a third party with the task of conceiving one's trademark takes on new meaning when the client is simultaneously a small family business from North Vancouver and an artistic partnership whose reputation exceeds national borders. A text accompanied several documents circulated by N.E. Thing Co. in which Fleming comments on the logotype's use:

This symbol-cum-logotype could only be designed for the N.E. THING CO. It is, in a way, a manufactured found object – one more form amid thousands of forms. It asks you to participate in the Company's future, in any way you see fit. You can fill it in. You can tell the Company what to see, or do, or have. And since the N.E. THING CO. has only a small number of ways in which to present its symbols to you, the company will depend upon the environment to duplicate the symbol. Every time you see the dotted leaders on a form – any form – you will think of the N.E. THING CO.⁴⁵

42 For complex reasons that are beyond the scope of this publication, there remains a dearth of critical discourse on conceptual art in Canada.

43 Other artists from the same period also established fictionalized or delocalized institutions. Joseph Kosuth and Christine Kozlov created the Museum of Normal Art in 1967, a gallery with no fixed address under which they organized exhibitions of work by their peers. In 1970, Canadian-American artist Les Levine founded the Museum of Mott Art (named after the street in New York on which he lived at the time). In his correspondence with "clients", he wrote on paper printed with an institutional-type letterhead mimicking the typeface of New York's Museum of Modern Art. The following year, he also published a leaflet describing the services offered by the museum, including their cost. In a text accompanying the updated 1974 version, the artist described these services as a resource for the art community after the end of art. See: Les Levine, *Museum of Mott Art inc.: Catalogue of Services*, 1971, and *Catalogue of After Art Services*, 1974.

44 Seth Siegelaub makes this remark during a conference organized by Iain Baxter as part of the exhibition "Environment" at the National Gallery of Canada in 1969. See: *N.E. Thing Co., conference (transcription)*, June 9, 1969. Exhibition file "The N.E. Thing Co., Ottawa, Ont., June 4 – July 6, 1969," Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

45 *President's Message / Message du président* / Iain Baxter (N.E. Thing Co.). Exhibition file "The N.E. Thing Co., Ottawa, Ont., June 4 – July 6, 1969," Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

The *zero degree* of N.E. Thing Co.'s form creates an interstice in which a surface designed to be written upon becomes an inscription, and vice versa.⁴⁶ Correlatively, this generic framework over determines the content of the messages that enter and exit the company's institutional perimeter.

In 1970, N.E. Thing Co. also created a graphic system to which the company hoped to subject the entire span of its projects. These "information sheets" were comprised of a grid-like structure resembling a blank architectural plan onto which the Baxters could add photographic prints related to their artistic projects and interventions (produced or not).

The word "INFORMATION" appeared on the top-left corner, as if to underscore the term's new value throughout the 1960s and 1970s. On the right-hand side, boxes were designed for inscribing the project's date, title, and serial number. Its description was to be written on the bottom of the page where the logo was printed across from the company's seal. This standardization apparatus amplified the singularities of the events that made up N.E. Thing Co.'s trajectory, while bearing witness, often in ambiguous ways, to the phenomenon whereby documents mutate into artworks.

In 1970, Iain Baxter took part in the commercial activities of the *International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition* (Seattle), an annual meeting where key players in information technology (IBM, 3M, etc.) met to showcase their new products. In parallel to its kiosk, N.E. Thing Co. forged correspondence paper out of the exposition's publicity materials and also produced a folder in which participants could insert their documents. This folder came with a text undermining the rhetoric of the exposition's participating companies, thereby trying to inflect their priorities and value systems:

N.E. Thing Consults with 1% of you ... the enlightened few who are ready to do something about ... new honesty in business ... If you can't make it, don't fake it ... the dirt to support culture ... which is history's true balance sheet after all ... seminars in culture, understanding contemporary art ...⁴⁷

That same year, N.E. Thing Co. also participated in the INFORMATION exhibition organized by Kynaston McShine at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which attempted to assess art practices falling under the rubric of conceptual art.⁴⁸ The registration forms that Iain Baxter filled out in order to take part in both events reveal

the gap that existed between modes of address aimed at groups whose ideological allegiances were diametrically opposed in Western society at the beginning of the 1970s.

During the previous decade, these groups attempted to partly eliminate such a hiatus. For instance, Experiments in Art and Technology was created in New York City in 1966 by engineers Billy Klüver and Fred Waldhauer from the Bell Telephone Laboratories, as well as artists Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman, in order to foster interdisciplinary collaboration.⁴⁹ This organization brought together some three hundred members (engineers and artists). In 1968, Dennis Young created a Toronto-based chapter of E.A.T., which was under the administrative responsibility of the education department of the Art Gallery of Ontario, where Young was employed as a curator. Michael Goldberg was responsible for the Montreal chapter. E.A.T. devised various tools for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information (forms, perforated cards, indexes) in view of combining the technical proficiency and interests of its members.

Contrary to the artists and engineers of E.A.T., whose coordinates intersected because of these templates but who nonetheless remained confined to their respective disciplinary fields, the name and address of N.E. Thing Co. appeared simultaneously in the catalogue of the INFORMATION exhibition and in the booklet of the *International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition*.⁵⁰ Around 1969, the Baxters also subscribed to the directory of Vancouver companies that made use of a Telex machine – a means of communication whose advertising potential was proportional to the then limited number of interlocutors who used this commercial network.⁵¹

Richard Cavell has analyzed how the writings of Marshall McLuhan influenced artists whose work encompassed the concept of the environment to circumvent the ideological assumptions of the modernist white cube.⁵² During the 1960s, this concept became a middle-ground between the site of presentation of works of art (the museum) and the latter's mediatization/dissemination. It mainly designated the immersive effects of installations and performances that blurred spatio-temporal frames of reference with the creation of an architectural enclosure charged with sensorial stimuli. Much like happenings that integrated various event-based strata (and which thereby created, according to McLuhan, a "total Gestalt"), the environment was a site where irreconcilable phenomena converged and where individuals could come together under the same banner and in the name of an experience they all shared.

46 The logo was frequently faxed with little effect on its legibility, despite its passage from one medium to the next.

47 *N. E. Thing Consults with 1% of you / N. E. Thing Co.*, 1970. Iain Baxter fonds, gift of Iain Baxter, 2000. E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, box 2, file 20.

48 Iain Baxter documented his work in the catalogue with a fax of a text-based self-portrait in a style reminiscent of a police report. See: *Information*, ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970).

49 *Statement of Purpose/Experiments in Art and Technology*, 1967. Experiments in Art and Technology fonds, purchased in 1976, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

50 *1970 International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition, Seattle Center* (Seattle: Data Processing Management Association, 1970). Event program. Iain Baxter fonds, gift of Iain Baxter, 2000. E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, box 2, file 20.

51 In an interview with Grant Arnold in 2009, Ingrid Baxter describes how they would frequently send messages overnight to member companies, who would then have to "manage" this unsolicited information the following morning. See: "Ingrid Baxter with Grant Arnold," in *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*, Vancouver: The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, grun gallery, Vancouver, 2009, (accessed by the author on 10 August 2009): [http://vancouver-artinthesixties.com/interviews/ingrid-baxter].

52 Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). On the notion of environment, see the chapter titled "Art Without Walls," 170-196.

In 1968, the Vancouver Art Gallery exceptionally ceded some of its exhibition spaces to members of the Intermedia Society, thereby allowing them to display the results of their audiovisual experiments.⁵³ The following year, Pierre Théberge, then curator of contemporary art at the National Gallery of Canada, invited N.E. Thing Co. to produce a hybrid apparatus entitled "Environment," which brought into relief the ambivalence of inserting a heterotopia into the institution's organizational complex. The Baxters opened a "branch" of their company on the ground floor of the Lorne Building on Elgin Street, thus temporarily reconciling it with its original function, which was to house public servants. However, during the course of their "residency" it was modified to resemble administrative offices and showrooms of an average-sized business. The Baxters and Théberge then published a report on the company's activities at this second head office.⁵⁴ This document made use of a mere fraction of the exhibition's file content (no. 1343) in which the real complexity of the project is played out. Aside from traces of the genesis of the project, which was to mobilize a large number of people (greatly exceeding the museum's staff), this file bears witness to an exceptional porosity between the managerial culture of government agencies and the manoeuvres of an artists' collective that mimicked the operational structure of a private company.⁵⁵

The mission statements of organizations usually contain an inventory of the services listed in their letters patent and, by the same token, they map out the hybrid nature of the artistic practices they hope to disseminate.

Within only a few years, the Intermedia Society (1967) and N.E. Thing Co. (1969) were incorporated as non-profit companies. The Baxters subverted this procedure in an ironic fashion, for as a result they became endowed with the fictitious identity of a single corporate body officially recognized by law. However, the cooperative's members offered real services. In both cases, the artists involved were redefining themselves as cultural workers and information managers.

The Intermedia Society and the Baxters also shared a common goal to "test out" the theories of Marshall McLuhan. A communiqué, published in 1967 by the organization, describes such a programme:

To be of much value to the communicator, communication theory must be directly related to the possibilities of actual application. A number of theories put forth by McLuhan and others should be subjected to suitably controlled tests and experimentations. INTERMEDIA WILL BE ENVIRONMENTALLY ORIENTED.

There will be an emphasis on environmental creation, simulation and manipulation.⁵⁶

In the course of its first years of operation, the institutional existence of the Intermedia Society brought to the fore the praxis of aesthetic decompartmentalization espoused by Dick Higgins in his essay entitled "Intermedia," first published in 1966, one year prior to the cooperative's legal constitution. The author contends that the separation of artistic disciplines corresponds to the social hierarchy of the industrial era, which is now obsolete.⁵⁷ With the automation of the manufacturing sector and the advent of a service-based economy (which Higgins links to the paradigm of a classless society), new forms of expression are to emerge whose main characteristic is to lie in the grey zone between media.

Other parallel galleries existed in Canada in the first years of the 1960s.⁵⁸ However, throughout the next decade, the Intermedia Society's activities would be a model for the creation of the first artist-run structures. Several important protagonists of the Vancouver contemporary art milieu took part in its technical workshops, meetings, and performances (Werner Aellen, Iain Baxter, Michael de Courcy, Kate Craig, Arthur Erickson, Gary Lee Nova, Glenn Lewis, Eric Metcalfe, Michael Morris, David Orcutt, Al Razutis, Jack Shadbolt, Vincent Trasov, Ed Varney, etc.).

The Intermedia Society embarked on a media democratization project, wherein the equipment acquired through government grants would become common property. It initially subscribed to Experiments in Art and Technology's sponsorship model by creating partnerships between established artists and the industrial sector. Later, it mostly offered a platform for young artists, who were given a production space and a place for meeting peers.⁵⁹ As one member (Gerry Gilbert) notes in 1970, the McLuhanesque spirit of Intermedia Society's first years of existence then manifested itself in the idea of collaboration as an end in itself:

The most important thing we do at Intermedia – what amazes everyone – is get [sic] together, and so effectively. It is our Message (just as the Bauhaus message was the Art School, and the Beatles' message was The Band) . . . and we are in a position to document and show how we do it. Maybe Intermedia is a model for a new kind of art school. We are certainly designing new structures of communication media: radio, TV, film, newspapers, art galleries, museums. We band together freely and make a new, open music

53 See: Michael de Courcy, "The Intermedia Catalogue," in *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*.

54 Pierre Théberge, N.E. Thing Co., *Report on the Activities of the N.E. Thing Co. of North Vancouver, British Columbia, at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and Other Locations, June 4 – July 6 1969* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971).

55 See in this publication the essay by David Tomas, "The Dilemma of Categories and the Overdetermination of a Business Practice: N.E. Thing Co. at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, June 4–July 6, 1969".

56 INTERMEDIA: A Survey of Intended Project Areas / Intermedia Society, ca. 1967, Victor Doray fonds, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, box 2, 8.3.02.

57 Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," *The Something Else Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (February 1966).

58 In 1962, Jack Chambers, Greg Curnoe, Brian Dibb, Larry Russell, Tony Urquhart, Bernice Vincent and Don Vincent established the Region Gallery in London, Ontario. The 20/20 Cooperative was then founded in 1966 by members Greg Curnoe, Tony Urquhart, Royden and David Rabinowitch, Ron Martin, Murray Favro, Jack Chambers, Geoff and Goldie Rans, John and Ray Davies.

59 *Interim Report to Canada Council for Period Ending January 31, 1968* / Intermedia Society, 1968, Intermedia Society fonds, gift of Edwin Varney 1980 and 1986, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Vancouver, box 3, folder 6.

(dance, poem...) in which the 'audience' is as creatively at work (play) as the 'performer.'⁶⁰

Its archival fonds, housed at the University of British Columbia Library's Rare Books and Special Collections, attests to this utopian undertaking. It affords researchers access to exceptional ethnographic material pertaining to the way artists collectively assimilated their new administrative tasks.

More or less informal meetings played an important role in the creation of this dialogic framework, and the members of the Intermedia Society produced very detailed minutes of such encounters in which the production of current projects was discussed, as well as matters pertaining to the organization's governance.

What strategies ought to be adopted to avoid transforming an open space that affords access to technological resources which are usually reserved to industries (and therefore inaccessible to artists) into a hierarchical structure? To what degree is the director to benefit from a certain power of decision? The purpose of these meetings was also to determine who should be responsible for the maintenance of equipment and to plan grant applications to the Canada Council for the Arts and private foundations.⁶¹

The archival fonds also includes collective log books containing detailed accounts of members' daily activities. In some entries, latent conflicts break out over member participation in the collective's undertakings. The artists make use of these platforms – written or spoken – to redefine the organization's mandate on a daily basis, or even to question the pertinence of their association.⁶²

In 1972, they decided to cast a backward glance at a collection of documents amassed since 1967 in view of conceiving a retrospective publication. In a letter addressed to Naïm Kattan,⁶³ they described such a book as a vast sampling of archives that would bring together transcribed testimonies, the outcome of various projects, and grant applications.⁶⁴ A request for information circulated within Vancouver's artistic community by making use of Image Bank's address list. Many testimonies were collected.⁶⁵ When the grant ultimately did not come in, this project was shelved until it was finally abandoned.⁶⁶

On 1 June 1972, the Intermedia Society held a meeting to decide whether it was worthwhile to submit a grant application to the Canada Council for the Arts.⁶⁷ The organization was dissolved that

same year, but its demise caused several other structures to be created, whose respective mandates pursued the Intermedia Society's initial aim (the Western Front Society, which brought together some of the cooperative's members – Glenn Lewis, Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov, Kate Craig, Eric Metcalfe – and Video Inn, which was founded by Michael Goldberg, among others, and was dedicated to the dissemination of video).

Although A Space (Toronto) and Véhicule Art (Montréal) shared the Intermedia Society's goal to make technology accessible, they encompassed the theoretical issues underpinning conceptual practices in a more direct manner.

Chris Young founded the Nightingale Arts Council (N.A.C.) in Toronto in 1971 with Robert Bowers, Ian Carr-Harris, Stephen Cruise, John McEwen, and businessman Bill Graham (formerly the president of McLaren's Advertising). In September, the Nightingale Gallery, directed by Young since 1968, became A Space (this name was used as of March 1971, since the location initially chosen to house the gallery burnt down). Later that year, Marion Lewis joined the Council.

Part of A Space's archival fonds is now housed at the Art Gallery of Ontario, while some administrative documents, including the organization's letters patent and the minutes of the first meetings, remain in the artist-run structure's building.⁶⁸

Cruise, Bowers, and Lewis emphasized the degree to which the site they occupied represented above all a conceptual vehicle whose function was indeterminate and subjected to the needs of artists. The name "A Space" thereby produced a performative effect in the sense that it programmed certain institutional uses despite its apparent neutrality.⁶⁹

When N.A.C. was incorporated on 6 January 1971, its members drafted a charter allowing them to increase their leverage as service providers. Correlatively, A Space opened a production studio for community video and operated a café that generated a secondary source of income.

As is the case with other structures, A Space made use of an address list to send and acquire documentation. Cruise, Bowers, and Lewis (who identified themselves collectively as the "directors") corresponded with their peers on an anonymous basis. Later, certain individuals functioned as mediating agents between the board, the artists, and the granting agencies.⁷⁰

60 Gerry Gilbert quoted in [Letter to David Silcox] / Intermedia Society, July 23, 1970, Intermedia Society fonds, box 3, file 6.

61 The Donner Foundation, among others.

62 See: *Intermedia Questionnaire* / Intermedia Society, June 12, 1970, Intermedia Society fonds, box 3, file 11.

63 Kattan was director of the Arts Council at the time.

64 [Letter to Naïm Kattan] / Intermedia Society, March 16, 1972, Intermedia Society fonds, box 3, file 12.

65 [Testimonials gathered for the publication] / anonymous, February 15th and 16th, 1972, Intermedia Society fonds, box 3, file 12.

66 In several documents, the members of Intermedia Society refer to a manuscript not found within the organization's archives.

67 Notice: *General Meeting of Intermedia Society* / Intermedia Society, June 1, 1972, Intermedia Society fonds, box 2, file 20.

68 The members of A Space have retained their administrative documents from 1971 to 1979, while correspondence with artists and grant organizations (Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council) were donated to the Art Gallery of Ontario. In addition, the portion of the collection covering the year 1970 is missing.

69 In an analogous approach, Jeffrey Lew opens the *112 Workshop* on Greene Street in New York's Soho district in 1970, allowing artists to push the architectural and discursive limits of the gallery as an exhibition site. On the concept of space within the mandates of the first parallel galleries in New York, see: Martin Beck, *Alternative Space*, in *Alternative Art New York (1965-1985)*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

70 Marien Lewis was in charge of communications during the structure's first years of operation.

The organization's monthly publication (entitled *News*) published conceptual projects received by mail without altering their content.⁷¹ *News* was sent to several important institutions and key figures in the international contemporary art world.⁷²

This strategy circumvented the need for a third party (art critic, curator, art dealer) and allowed artists to assess projects they themselves had initiated. Two exhibitions presented at A Space addressed this parallelism between the "production of space" and the mediation of art.

In 1972, with the project *Intervention*, Gunter Nolte poured one hundred gallons of glaze onto polystyrene sheets covering the gallery's floor. The glaze dried, cracked and thereby brought to the fore the effects that environmental factors such as humidity and ambient temperature – which normally remain invisible – have on the perennial character of an architectural situation. A list enumerated all the steps required for producing this project, beginning with Nolte's first contacts with members of A Space: "A Space, hear about them . . ." and ending with the artist's departure from Toronto: "drive through fog home to Montreal."⁷³

In May 1973, Tom Sherman produced an installation along similar lines. Entitled *Faraday Cage*, it was comprised of a structure covered with metallic sheets that disrupted surrounding radio frequencies.⁷⁴ To demonstrate the principle underpinning his apparatus, which was described in an artist's statement hanging on the wall, Sherman escorted visitors to the inside of the cage, while wearing a transistor that did not register any waves. As he later claimed:

Over the course of a couple of weeks a couple of hundred people tried the cage, with probably a dozen getting in the experiment seriously. Some spent evenings when the gallery was closed mediating and generally inhabiting the cage. People had meetings, their meals, slept and had sex in the Faraday Cage.⁷⁵

Again, space was not defined merely by its architectural limits. It was apprehended as the superimposition of various systems in which information could be perceived simultaneously on material and immaterial planes.

The 45°30'N - 73°36'W exhibition, held at the Saidye Bronfman Centre and at the Sir George Williams Gallery in 1971, was organized by artists Gary Coward, William Vazan, and art critic George Bardo. It

distinguished itself as one of the first conceptual art exhibitions to be held in Montreal.⁷⁶ Several Canadian and American artists working in a more or less conceptual mode took part (N.E. Thing Co., Ian Wallace, Michael Snow, Sol LeWitt, Les Levine, Françoise Sullivan, Jeff Wall, etc.).

In 1971, Coward, Vazan, and a group of Montreal artists united in the hopes of extending art beyond the dictates of modernism. They sketched out the programme of an organization that was to be incorporated under the name Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. the following year.⁷⁷ Coward, Tom Dean, Jean-Marie Delavalle, François Déry, Andrew Dutkewych, Suzy Lake, Dennis Lucas, Kelly Morgan, Gunter Nolte, Milly Ristvedt, Henry Saxe, Serge Tousignant, and William Vazan were its founding members. Like A Space, it used a spatial metaphor (the vehicle), thereby placing emphasis on the accessibility of its architectural, technological, and human resources. However, this reference to a neutral container also acted as a catalyst for bilingualism and emphasized the strategic apolitical stance of artists who lived in a city that was still strongly divided along cultural lines. During its first years of operation, most of the organization's administrative and advertising documents were written in both official languages.

Now housed at Concordia University, the Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. archival fonds is exceptional in that it contains the minutes of meetings held before the organization's incorporation, as well as supporting documents sent to the Canada Council for the Arts in order to obtain a start-up grant. Aside from a chronology highlighting important events, these documents create a record of the transition from an informal association project to the attainment of institutional status. Much like the Intermedia Society or A Space, the artists also attempted to define their new role as cultural workers and administrators within this structure. Members hoped to make the exhibition selection process transparent by avoiding to project an elitist image to the public and granting agencies. This concern made itself manifest in the intelligible and perennial character of the traces left by each of their transactions. A letter sent to Canada Council for the Arts programme officer Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne on 7 March 1972 attests to this state of affairs as the artists underscored their will to produce evidence of their negotiations in order "to avoid confusion or possible misrepresentation."⁷⁸

In the wake of these projects, Véhicule members attempted to constitute a documentation centre on contemporary art that would make available publications, invitation cards, press releases, etc., amassed during research and prospecting trips in Canada, the United

71 See *Information Package / A Space*, 1971; *A Space NEWS* 4 (August 1971); *A Space NEWS* 5, 6 (September 1971).

72 After receiving A Space's *NEWS* bulletin, Lucy Lippard mentions the opening of the gallery in *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object...*, 215.

73 *Letter to A Space / Gunter Nolte*, May 7th, 1972. A Space fonds, gift of A Space Gallery, 1996, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, artist file: "Gunter Nolte." Photographic documentation of this installation was disseminated through Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.'s newsletter. See: *Véhicule Newsletter* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1973), n.p.

74 The installation was based on the principle of Michael Faraday's experiment realized in 1875.

75 Tom Sherman, *The Faraday Cage*, 2008, 3. Unpublished manuscript.

76 45°30'N - 73°36'W + *Inventory*, organized by Gary Coward and Bill Vazan (Montréal: Sir George Williams University, 1971).

77 *Board meeting / Gary Coward, Jean-Marie Delavalle, Andy Dutkewich, Dennis Lukas, Suzy Lake, Kelly Morgan, Gunter Nolte, Milly Ristvedt, Henry Saxe, Normand Thériault, Serge Tousignant*, Saturday, December 11, 1971. Véhicule art (Montréal) inc. fonds, Concordia University Archives, Montréal, P027.1c/1.

78 "We appreciate your suggestion that we use the telephone – certainly a faster means of communication – but we consider it more important that we have clear records of all negotiations and statements to avoid confusion, or possible misrepresentation" quoted in *Letter to Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne / Milly Ristvedt*, 7 March 1972. Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds, P027.3a/1.

States, and Europe. Much like Western Front and Art Metropole, they conceived the accessibility to this fonds as an extension of their information dissemination activities. In 1975, they created Artdata in order to systematize the cataloguing methods for the documents they accumulated.⁷⁹

ADDRESSES

As part of the postal system, addresses can be said to possess an arbitrary relation of contiguity to the locale they designate. However, when artists attempt momentarily to obliterate geographic and cultural borders, the coordinates of their organization's head office is the only marker left of the existence of a point of emission and reception of messages.

According to Marshall McLuhan, electronic signals short-circuit the control mechanisms of capital when they are emitted within delocalized circuits. Therefore, all collective forms arising far from metropolitan centres can be said to function as sites that harbour micro-economies, if only virtually. In a 1970 CBC interview, McLuhan commented on the impact this epistemological rupture had on the definition of the nuclear family:

(Where does that information output, the fact that information is so readily available, where does that put the traditional family situation, for instance?) It means for one thing, that the computer could become the basis of a cottage economy again... You could run the world's biggest factory in a kitchen by computer. In other words, the nature of instant speech – telephone, telex, computer – is to decentralize all forms of management and all forms of hardware. The computer, literally, could run the world from a cottage.⁸⁰

By managing N.E. Thing Co. from their suburban house located at 1419 Riverside Drive in North Vancouver, Iain and Ingrid Baxter gave substance to this futuristic narrative in which the centre and the periphery interpenetrate. Much like the Intermedia Society, which sought to put McLuhan's theories into practice, the couple attempted to adapt the theorist's theses to its own scale, i.e., as a family unit.

Whereas the address of N.E. Thing Co.'s head office appears on all promotional documents, thereby marking the company as local (and localized), the infrastructure forged by both presidents functioned within an institutional field which, in normal circumstances, was

beyond the reach of Canadian artists. As William Wood has noted, these communications strategies allowed N.E. Thing Co. to acquire an enviable reputation within the international conceptual art circuit, while making the organization known in the Vancouver area and in the West Coast of the United States as a legitimate company.⁸¹

During the same period, William Vazan collected the addresses of museums, self-managed structures, commercial galleries and artists in order to draw a hypothetical line traced simultaneously in various locations across Canada (*Canada Line*, 9 January 1970), and later across the globe (*World Line*, 5 March 1971).⁸² Based on a set of mathematical calculations done with the help of an engineer, these projects generated immaterial junction points on a map. However, they were given a tangible form with a strip of adhesive tape placed on the ground according to specific configurations in each of the projects' locations. Vazan coordinated these interventions from his family residence at 5171 Orleans Avenue in Montreal, which functioned both as an office and as a studio. He then published documents taken from his correspondence with institutions or individuals.⁸³ Although this project is relegated to the sphere of art, it does resemble the communications strategies deployed by N.E. Thing Co. insofar as it seeks to enlarge artists' fields of visibility in view of overcoming their geographic isolation.

When the Baxters published a section of their company's letters patent in the British Columbia Gazette, they brought to the fore the protocol whereby their identity as artists shifted into that of specialists of visual or sensitivity information. Analogously, by inserting themselves into a trade fair catalogue alongside IBM or 3M, they hoped to increase their "surplus value" as consultants.

The consequence of such undertakings was to produce unintentional publicity for the telecommunications technologies sector to which the Baxters had exceptional access. The booklet for the NETWORK 70 project described the ready-to-use service N.E. Thing Co. offered its "clients" in the field of art (galleries, museums, art schools, etc.).⁸⁴ Provided users paid for the Telex's rental and transmission costs, the company would manage the logistics (installing the machine, training and related activities, etc.). Under the pretext of creating an international network, the Baxters in fact extended the market reach of a tool that was still mainly used by corporations and thereby made it available to cultural institutions. Thus, if their technico-human complex functioned within one of the grey zones of capitalism, it nonetheless endorsed a media democratization project in which artists now played the role of "incidental persons."⁸⁵

⁸¹ See: William Wood, "Capital and Subsidiary: The N.E. Thing Co. and the Revision of Conceptual Art," in *You Are Now in the Middle of an N.E. Thing Company Landscape*, ed. Nancy Shaw, Scott Watson and William Wood, (Vancouver: Fine Arts Gallery, University of British Columbia, 1993), 11-24.

⁸² On Vazan's conceptual work, see: *Bill Vazan: Walking into the Vanishing Point: art conceptuel / Conceptual Art*, ed. Marie-Josée Jean and William Vazan (Montréal: Vox Image Contemporaine, 2009).

⁸³ Bill Vazan, *World Line*, 1971. Artist's book.

⁸⁴ "INFORMATION about N.E. Thing: 'Network' 70" / N.E. Thing Co., 1970, 10 p. Iain Baxter fonds, gift of Iain Baxter, 2000. E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, box 12, file 21.

⁸⁵ The British collective Artist Placement Group (founded in 1968 by John Latham) coined the expression "incidental person" to describe an artist's identity when he/she inserts him/herself within production contexts that are peripheral to the art world, such as industry or government agencies. The Artist Placement Group archival fonds was acquired by the Tate Gallery in 2005. See: *Art and Social Intervention: The Incidental Person*, 2005, (accessed by the author on 10 August 2009): [http://www.tate.org.uk/onlineevents/webcasts/art_social_intervention_APG/default.jsp]. The couple's commercial activities were not limited to N.E. Thing Co. Starting in 1974, they began operating the N.E. Professional Photo Display Labs LTD (specializing in cibachrome), and in 1976, the Eye Scream restaurant.

⁷⁹ This collection is now partially integrated to the holdings of Artexte Information Centre in Montréal.

⁸⁰ Marshall McLuhan, "Interview with Ed Fitzgerald," *The New Majority*, 25 August 1970, CBC Television, quoted by Janine Marchessault in *Marshall McLuhan, Cosmic Media* (London: Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), 220.

- 86 See: Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002).
- 87 In 1970, Glenn Lewis, a close collaborator of Image Bank, created the New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver, an informal collaborative structure modelled on Ray Johnson's New York Correspondance [sic] School. See in this publication the essay by Anne Bénichou, "A Memorial to the 'Eternal Network.' Or the Unexpected Meeting of an Artist and an Administrator in a National Institute for Scientific and Technical Information."
- 88 Gary Lee Nova also participated in Image Bank's activities until 1972.
- 89 Their name was inspired by the image bank motif in the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and William S. Burroughs. For a comprehensive account of Image Bank's activities between 1969 and 1977, see: *Hand of the Spirit: Documents of the Seventies from the Morris/Trasov Archive*, ed. Scott Watson (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1992), and *Golden Streams: Artists Collaborations and Exchange in the 1970s*, ed. Luis Jacob (Mississauga: Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga, 2002).
- 90 Vincent Trasov adopted his Planters Mr. Peanut identity, while Michael Morris used the pseudonyms of Marcel Idea and Marcel Dot in correspondence with his peers. This role-playing simultaneously extended to various network members.
- 91 See: *The Search for the Spirit: General Idea 1968-1975*, ed. Fern Bayer and Christina Ritchie (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1997).
- 92 In 1970, Image Bank was included in the New York Correspondance [sic] School exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Eager to establish filiations, some historians associate their work with mail art. However, Morris and Trasov (as well as Ray Johnson) reject this movement, which they consider was constructed after the fact by the critics.
- 93 On the significance of the concept of eternal network for Canadian artists, see: *Robert Filliou: For Poetical to Political Economy* (exhibition catalogue), (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 1995); Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administration of Art and Culture*, 16.
- 94 However, it is preferable to include this filiation within a broader discursive framework, and thereby avoid making it the origin of a social imaginary of this period.

According to Michael Warner, the public embodies a "point of convergence" of ideologies in which an indistinct mass of anonymous subjects is brought together as locutors who therefore become tacit receivers.⁸⁶ This mass is, nonetheless, a virtual, fictitious social object and not a group one can count or name. Counterpublics are similar to publics insofar as both can be said to share an imaginary mode of address, but the former circumscribe the receivers and the producers of messages in a precise manner. N.E. Thing Co. and William Vazan made use of technologies from the tertiary sector that granted them a certain agency within the early-1970s expanded art field. For their part, Image Bank and General Idea subverted the postal system, understood here as an ad hoc tool, in order to crystallize a space for exchange that was partially beyond the reach of this field and of mass-media hegemony.⁸⁷

When Michael Morris and Vincent Trasov⁸⁸ founded Image Bank in Vancouver in 1969, they hoped to undermine the iron grip that rights holders had on visual culture throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁸⁹ Their tacit rule, whereby all intellectual property is to be cancelled, encouraged them to appropriate other people's statements and to resort to role-playing strategies (pseudonyms, etc.).⁹⁰

That same year, General Idea was formed in Toronto out of a collaboration between AA Bronson (Michael Tims), Felix Partz (Ron Gabe), and Jorge Zontal (Slobodan Saia-Levy).⁹¹ These groups' projects of cultural decentralization took up several strategies from the historical avant-gardes (Dada in particular) and from Fluxus, but Ray Johnson represented their main influence.⁹² Johnson was known for mailing collages with instructions for participants to transform and post them back to their sender ("add to and return"). He then founded the New York Correspondance [sic] School in order to give a fictitious, yet effective, form to the mode of exchange he fostered.

The concept of an eternal network imagined by Robert Filliou and George Brecht in the wake of the events of May '68 functioned according to a similar utopian programme, which assumed that artists constitute a community that circumvents institutional units of measure.⁹³ For a long time, the rise of the first artist-run structures was understood in terms of a recycling of Filliou's ideas (this influence is particularly noteworthy in the case of many Canadian artists' collectives, especially anglophone ones).⁹⁴

In 1970, Image Bank circulated an announcement card and an image request list. A reproduction of a photograph of Nancy Berg, a 1950s model, accompanied this card bearing the caption "Image of the

Month." The list was sent solely to contributors. Image Bank then distributed its first (and only) annual report (year 1971), which contained a statement on the collective's current projects and an inventory of the services it hoped to offer.⁹⁵ This undertaking once again defined the agency these artists sought to give themselves by adding an intrinsic value to the dissemination of information.

However, some mediating tools mapped out this decentralized platform so as to enable its users to determine its discursive limits. With the help of Talonbooks, Morris and Trasov published an initial version of the exhaustive alphabetical list of individuals whose names and addresses had been collected.⁹⁶ This directory contained a selection of images gathered by means of these requests. Its dissemination snowballed, for it extended the network exponentially.

The concept of the counterpublic generally refers to the discursive spaces occupied by subaltern groups. However, Michael Warner notes that these groups mimic the protocols of hegemonic institutions when it comes to creating their own means of communication.⁹⁷ By forging such tools, Image Bank and General Idea extended the reach of their recycling activities to the logic of mechanisms by means of which information circulated in the capitalist society of the 1970s.

With *Orgasm Energy Chart* (1970), General Idea asked its correspondents to register the frequency of their orgasms and to send this information to the company's "headquarters." The collective conceived an ad hoc form comprised of a grid of thirty-one days (vertical axis) and of an array of boxes representing fifteen-minute slots so that users could keep track of each of the "event's" occurrences (horizontal axis). Other data was also requested: birth date, orgasm location, participant's gender. A synoptic table was planned, but it was never produced.⁹⁸ By reifying the identity of its peers, General Idea simulated in an ironic way the "administrative" neutrality of conceptualism, while undermining the 1960s utopia in which art and daily life were to be merged. In a recent interview, AA Bronson recounts his experience with collectivism, from the commune in which he lived in Winnipeg in the 1960s, to the porous zones between the house the collective rented and the offices of *FILE Magazine*:

I think at the very beginning, everybody in the group was involved in some sort of way, however peripherally. It was just a part of life. Making FILE was part of our daily life.⁹⁹

Contrary to Image Bank, General Idea was incorporated at the beginning of the 1970s under the name Art_Official in order to provide

- 95 Image Bank, *Legal Tender: Annual Report* (Vancouver: Intermedia, 1972).
- 96 *International Image Exchange Directory* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1972).
- 97 Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*.
- 98 See: *General Idea: Editions: 1967-1995*, ed. Barbara Fischer (Mississauga: Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga, 2003), 45.
- 99 AA Bronson/Dont Rhine, "Is This Where We Should Begin?" in *Make Everything New: A Project on Communism* (London: Bookworks/Project Arts Center), 38-53.

services to its peers. The existence of this corporate body initially made itself manifest in the process of publishing *FILE Magazine*. During its first years of operation, the magazine displaced fragments taken from correspondence into the space of publication. The inaugural issue's editorial describes this pan-Canadian "organ" as a "space hidden between one gallery and the next" in which the content of decentralized files converges.¹⁰⁰ The organization then founded Art Metropole (1974) whose role was to disseminate these archives as well as artists' books.

In both cases, the collective subtly subverted an existing structure. *FILE* reconfigured the graphic layout of the American magazine *LIFE*. Art Metropole's writing paper and the cover of its first catalogue mimicked the façade of the building that housed the artist-run structure as it appeared in a 1911 article (when the Yonge Street building housed an art supply store). However, General Idea and Art Metropole generated distinct archival fonds, which are now deposited at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa).

Image Bank's and General Idea's correspondence projects addressed a set of stereotypes stemming from a previous generation, particularly one that read *LIFE* in the 1950s and 1960s. The artists worked according to a method proposed by Roland Barthes, which consists in establishing a constellation of new myths by uprooting cultural signifiers from the ideologically charged context in which they originally circulated.¹⁰¹

With its Cultural Ecology Project (1972), Image Bank asked its correspondents to send in "piss pics" to American art critic Barbara Rose (the spelling of her name was altered to recall Rose Sélavy, Marcel Duchamp's alter ego). In a predictable manner, certain addressees' responses cited works by Duchamp or submitted art historical references (e.g. the Manneken-Pis). Others sent pornographic or scatological materials to test out the permeability of the postal system as a parallel communications tool.

In contrast, the conservatism that prevailed in previous generations became the object of study of another project, also undertaken in 1972. This time Image Bank formulated the following request: "Inventors of today are planning now for tomorrow! Please send your image of 1984 to Image Bank." Taken from various 1950s and 1960s sources – *LIFE*, *Popular Science*, *Fortune*, etc. – the images that were sent in by correspondents recalled obsolete representations of progress and technology, while bringing to the fore the desires and anxieties that were characteristic of this period. Subsequently, these constellations

¹⁰⁰ "The phenomenon of FILE and of files emerges from the underbrush of available art, shuffling its leaves in patterned disarray. Files are the dead matter of appropriated ideas, the manure of Rat city, the space hidden between one gallery and the next". General Idea, "Editorial: Some Juicy and Malicious Gossip," *FILE* 1, no. 1 (April 1972): 2.

¹⁰¹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972).

of floating signifiers from another era became the impetus of several collaborations within the network. By accumulating narratives conjugated in the future tense through performances and by-products, General Idea imagined a pavilion whose construction was to be put off until 1984. With its *Time Capsule*, the Californian collective Ant Farm stocked food items and medicine representative of the year 1972 in a refrigerator that was to be sealed until 1984.¹⁰²

In 1973, Glenn Lewis requested objects of daily use, various assemblages, etc. These artefacts were encased in transparent boxes (each box was attributed by participants to a chosen year between 1620 and 1984). Contributions were then assembled in a mural structure entitled *Great Wall of 1984* at the library of the National Research Council of Canada (Ottawa).¹⁰³ However, this platform was not solely limited to the circulation of photographic or textual items sent in by participants.

David Joselit reflects on the paradox that the transmission of images by means of television represented for artists working in the 1960s and 1970s. Video, which is predicated on the instability of the electronic signal and on feedback, fostered strategies for the dissemination of information. In contrast, television depended on a private network from which most citizens were de facto excluded as participants and were therefore relegated to the role of passive spectators.¹⁰⁴ Several artists and activists hoped to unhinge this signal from a filtering apparatus that translated it into a commodity that was unilaterally deployed into the public sphere.

In 1967, the Japanese company Sony commercialized the half-inch, black-and-white portable video system called Portapak, which comprised a camera and a sound recorder. Its arrival on the market coincided with the emergence of artists' collectives that granted themselves the identity of cultural workers according to a model of self-determination. Many such artists sought to introduce their peers and activist groups to the possibilities afforded by video. To this effect, the Raindance Corporation (New York) published *Radical Software* magazine in 1970, which gradually became a platform for individuals rallied around this new tool. The principle of feedback characterizing video's electronic signal was reiterated in these printed documents, thereby encouraging the appropriation of this medium and establishing a discourse on its uses. A similar project was also taken up in Canada at the same time.

By virtue of the distribution of ad hoc forms, the Intermedia Society's Michael Goldberg (in collaboration with Image Bank) collected the

¹⁰² Finally unsealed in 2002. See: *Ant Farm: 1968-1976*, ed. Constance M. Lewallen and Steve Seid (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 108-109.

¹⁰³ For a detailed analysis of this work, see in this publication the essay by Anne Bénichou, "A Memorial to the Eternal 'Network.' Or the Unexpected Meeting of an Artist and an Administrator in a National Institute for Scientific and Technical Information".

¹⁰⁴ David Joselit, *Feedback: Television Against Democracy* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2007).

addresses of video makers and a short description of the way in which each of them made use of the Portapak system. These forms were printed in various periodicals (*Radical Software*, *artscanada*, *FILE Magazine*, the National Film Board's Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle program's information bulletins, etc.).¹⁰⁵ Data was then gathered in directories allowing participants to exchange tapes by mail. As a preamble to the first such directory published by the Intermedia Society in 1971, Goldberg writes the following concerning its use:

This directory has been started to facilitate the exchange of small format video-tapes; so that more people may gain confidence in their eye. I do not wish to become a bureaucratic central or distribution agent, for my time is devoted to my sculpture and work with VTR. Exchange here means information sharing: people will have to contact each other directly.¹⁰⁶

Aside from this catalyzing function for the exchange of information, Michael Goldberg also supported the free circulation of videotapes beyond restrictions imposed by Canadian border services (that still regarded this type of object as merchandise).¹⁰⁷ Much like Image Bank's directories, the address of Portapak users was only circulated within the closed network constituted by the individuals who filled out the forms. Moreover, the alphabetical sequence arbitrarily brought into closer contact groups whose ideological allegiances were diametrically opposed to one another. Even if video technology had not been conceived in view of creating such social (mis)uses, the directory thus placed the Algerian Black Panthers party, American or Canadian video collectives (Raindance/Radical Software), and cultural institutions (the National Gallery of Canada), under the same rubric.¹⁰⁸

CYBERNETIC WELFARE STATE

From the late 1960s onwards, artists banked on the exceptional convergence of their projects of self-determination with the decentralized governance policies instigated by Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

In 1968, the NFB and the Secretary of State piloted the Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle program allowing citizens to use audio-visual production equipment (16 mm film, portable video) to address issues related to their daily lives.¹⁰⁹ Given the evidence of this undertaking's success, the body of films produced in this context set the stage for subsequent programmes. In 1971, Robert Forget, a producer

at the National Film Board, created Vidéographe (Montréal) as one of the offshoots of Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle.¹¹⁰

On the basis of the submission of a project proposal, Vidéographe offered the necessary resources to those interested in producing documentary and experimental films. Each step in the production process was facilitated: from the rental of the Portapak system to public screenings of the finished work in the "vidéothéâtre." As Vidéographe was housed in a street-level location, the centre's doors were permanently open (twenty-four hours a day). In addition, Vidéographe's staff conceived and marketed a module (the *éditomètre*) configured to facilitate the otherwise arduous task of editing. Moreover, Vidéographe's mandate was not solely to act as a purveyor of equipment. Other communications tools helped distribute these video documents across Quebec. With the aid of cards used to catalogue completed projects, citizens who lived far from Montreal could obtain free copies of video works by sending a blank tape by mail. The cable network was also utilized as a novel means of distribution.¹¹¹

In 1970, the youth unemployment rate reached an unprecedented level and Trudeau feared that popular unrest would skyrocket. Thus, the Secretary of State launched its Opportunities for Youth (OFY) program designed to offer job-creating opportunities to unemployed citizens by means of community-based projects.¹¹² During a speech, the secretary Gérard Pelletier stated: "the programme's breadth will only be limited by the imagination of the youth themselves."¹¹³ This rhetoric, which was inspired by the slogans of May 68 ("imagination au pouvoir," [imagination in power]), would effectively appeal to the groups it targeted. However, such groups did not yet perceive the control mechanisms looming under the guise of this utopia of emancipation.

Some artists' collectives submitted projects,¹¹⁴ but the Local Initiatives Programme (LIP) would be the real impetus behind the artist-run centres as they are known today.¹¹⁵ This program was launched by the Department of Manpower and Immigration to reduce the unemployment rate, if only temporarily, which was still very high between November 1971 and May 1972.¹¹⁶

LIP's objectives were similar to those of OFY, but this program was not designed solely for youth. The exacerbated complexity of the registration procedures partly dissipated the complaints of citizens, who argued that most of the beneficiaries did not possess the necessary skills to sidestep a hierarchical structure. Applicants had to fill out

¹⁰⁵ *Radical Software* 1, no. 4 (summer 1971). Issue devoted in part to video in Canada; *artscanada*, (October/November 1971); *FILE* 1, no. 1 (April 1972); *Access. Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle*, no. 12 (1973), ed. Elizabeth Prinn and Dorothy Todd Hénaut, Montréal, National Film Board of Canada/Office National du Film du Canada. Program's newsletter.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Goldberg (in collaboration with Image Bank), *Video Exchange Directory* (Vancouver: Intermedia, 1971). This directory was subsequently updated on a regular basis.

¹⁰⁷ See: Michael Goldberg, *The Accessible Portapak Manual* (Vancouver, self-published, 1974).

¹⁰⁸ In 1973, in collaboration with Trisha Hardman, Goldberg organized the Matrix conference in Vancouver. As an entry fee, participants had to donate a videotape. This method of exchange later on helped to constitute the collection of Video Inn / Video Satellite Exchange Society, founded the same year.

¹⁰⁹ See program newsletters in *Access. Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle*, no. 1 (Spring 1968) – no. 8 (Spring 1972).

¹¹⁰ Initially under the umbrella of the NFB, the centre incorporated in 1973.

¹¹¹ See in this publication the essay by Marion Froger, "Collective Dynamics at Vidéographe (1970-1975)".

¹¹² *Youth 71: An Inquiry into the Transient Youth and Opportunities for Youth Programs in the Summer of 1971*, (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹¹⁴ Image Bank and General Idea amongst others.

¹¹⁵ Eligible projects covered the entire spectrum of services normally offered by the community sector: improvement of living conditions for the elderly, hiring members of aboriginal communities to improve facilities, supporting cultural and social organizations by increasing their programs, repairing infrastructure, etc.

¹¹⁶ In addition to documents from the archival fonds of self-managed organizations (quoted accordingly) the facts stated here on the history of the Local Initiatives Program were found in the following sources: *Guide à l'intention des parrains, programme des initiatives locales: 1973-1974*, Direction de la création d'emplois (Ottawa: Manpower and Immigration, 1973); Donald E Blake, "LIP and Partnerships: An Analysis of the Local Initiatives Program," *Canadian Public Policy = Analyse de politiques* 1, no. 1 (winter 1976): 17-32; Paul D. Shafer, *Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy* (Paris: UNESCO, 1976).

a form distributed by the regional offices of the Ministry of Labour and attach a detailed description of their project, as well as support letters from high-ranking individuals or respected professionals (doctors, lawyers, municipal counsellors, school principals).

Between 1971 and 1973, most artist-run structures submitted projects to this program. The Intermedia Society made use of sociological profiling systems to amass data on various Vancouver communities.¹¹⁷ In this context, composer R. Murray Schafer tested a method for collecting sound samples of urban noise that allowed him to analyze the degree of environmental sound pollution. In the wake of Image Bank's activities, Morris and Trasov compiled a directory of decentralized files to document projects completed during the artists' employment period. General Idea conceived *FILE* as a "transcanada organ" produced by "and for" artists.¹¹⁸ A grant was awarded to the collective to hire fourteen people and to finance the production costs of the first three issues. Ultimately, twenty-five individuals living in various Canadian cities were remunerated. Applications submitted by A Space and Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. were of a more pragmatic nature, as they sought to expand the sectors of operation already in place when these organizations were constituted. Thus, A Space proposed to introduce the Toronto population to the use of Portapak video equipment and to publish a trilingual directory (English, French, Italian) of the city's cultural resources.¹¹⁹ This directory contained entries describing community centres, theatres, bookstores, as well as parallel galleries and artists' groups.¹²⁰ It was printed on an offset press, which A Space borrowed from Coach House Press. The project submitted by Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. consisted in the creation of eighteen temporary positions to initiate a set of pedagogical activities and to reinforce the operations of its publishing sector.¹²¹ Ten people were hired to fulfil tasks related to administration and to the dissemination of information. Eight other employees managed the offset printing cooperative, which produced the entire range of the centre's publications and supported Montreal artists who wished to explore the possibilities of printed matter.¹²² This program also allowed members of Véhicule Art to create a context in which the work of cultural mediation would intersect with theoretical questions raised by conceptual art. Upon William Vazan's request, Sol LeWitt sent instructions to produce one of his "Wall Drawings" on the walls of the gallery. In order to inaugurate its pedagogical activities, the centre also invited members of various teaching institutions (high schools, universities) to execute LeWitt's drawing in their classrooms. The gap between LeWitt's "score" and its actual execution then generated debates pertaining

117 Application to: The Local Initiatives Program, Department of Manpower and Immigration, Intermedia Society, 2023 East 1st Avenue for: Intermedia Project for the Greening of the Community / Intermedia Society (Glenn Lewis, Gary Lee-Nova, Ian Wallace, Michael Morris, Joe Kyle), 1971. Morris/Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, accession number 30.03.

118 Re: General Idea Application number 311-178 to the Local Initiatives Program, Toronto / General Idea, c. 1972; Final Report - LIP / General Idea, June 1972, Art Metropole fonds, Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Series 5 "Art Metropole: Grants," box 2 of 4, file entitled: "L.I.P. FILE - 1971-1972."

119 Vehicle Handbook of Toronto Cultural Resources / Manuel de ressources culturelles de Toronto / Manuale delle risorse culturali di Toronto, ed. Isobel Harry and Marlene Sober (Toronto: A Space, 1972).

120 Nightingale Art Council (Application to the Local Initiatives Program) / Robert Bowers, Stephen Cruise, 21 September 1972. A Space fonds, gift of A Space Gallery, 1996. E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, box 87, file entitled "71/71 Local Initiatives Program."

121 Véhicule "Phase II": A Proposed Local Initiative Project in Reply to Question Number Seven, Manpower and Immigration: Local Initiatives Program 1972-1973 / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1972, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds, Concordia University Archives, Montréal, P027.1b/2.

122 See the essay by Felicity Tayler in this publication, "Publication as Alternative Space".

to the limits of the notion of authorship when an artwork operates through an act of delegation.¹²³

Although artists had by now become accustomed to the tasks required by their new roles as administrators, this context allowed them to circumscribe a series of services and, additionally, the employment categories necessary for the production of their projects.

Most artist-run structures would not have survived their first years of existence had these programmes not been created. However, numerous beneficiaries have revealed that the amount of work required for writing reports and producing related documents required by the Department of Manpower and Immigration exceeded the time devoted to the projects themselves.¹²⁴

The Explorations programme, created by the Canada Council for the Arts in 1973, partially continued the work of LIP. It represented this arm's-length governmental organization's openness to new needs arising from changes in society at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the following decade. This time, the program was not solely designed as an attempt to reduce the unemployment rate. All projects were eligible provided they did not originate from disciplines already being covered by other categories of the granting system. In the wake of the cultural decentralization that characterized the 1970s, the Council made sure that its marketing tools reached cities located far from urban centres; it sometimes even sent agents in the field. Moreover, peer jury members were selected from each provincial riding. Decisions were then approved by a national committee.

Some self-managed structures benefited from this fortunate state of affairs, such as General Idea, which received a start-up grant to found Art Metropole in 1973 (after an unsuccessful application to LIP).

On 21 November 1969, Pierre Elliott Trudeau declared:

The many techniques of cybernetics, by transforming the control function and the manipulation of information, will transform our whole society. With this knowledge we are wide awake, alert, capable of action; no longer are we blind, inert, pawns of faith.¹²⁵

The intersection of a paradigm of self-determination with the control mechanisms of the Providence State crystallized this "cybernetic" social-democracy.

123 LeWitt Education Report / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1973, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds, Concordia University Archives, Montréal, P027.5b/12.

124 See: Stuart Brommer, "Business as Usual: The Newest Utopia" in *FILE* 1, no. 1 (April 1972): 15, 24.

125 Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Office of the Prime Minister, "Notes for Remarks by the Prime Minister at the Harrison Liberal Conference," Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia, Nov. 21, 1969, 7, quoted in A. Paul Pross, "From System to Serendipity: The Practice and Study of Public Policy in the Trudeau Years," *Canadian Public Administration / Administration publique canadienne* (Winter 1982): 520-544.

Grant applications submitted by artist-run structures are an index of the extent to which tasks were accomplished so that measures encouraging the remuneration of volunteer work would reinforce the obligation to renew financing. However, artists were obligated to supply government agencies with documentary materials so that the latter could compile statistics and reports on their reinsertion into the social contract. The level of freedom granted was always inversely proportional to the sum total of efforts invested to prove that such freedom would be of service to the majority and would not represent unjustified spending of public funds.

The archives of the Intermedia Society, A Space, and Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. contain correspondence between artists and Canada Council for the Arts programme officers (David Silcox and Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne) from which one can glean that agreements were sometimes reached on amicable terms. However, the encounter of citizens with the State never happens as a face-to-face meeting, but by means of a form.¹²⁶ This apparatus acts as an interface between individuals and the system, which is only perceived indirectly, in the guise of written statements that request citizens to provide information about themselves. Blank spaces represent the interstice wherein their subjectivity can be inscribed. Forms thereby "recruit" subjects by means of an act of "interpellation" (to use a concept developed by Louis Althusser in the 1970s).¹²⁷ Since the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts, they are an integral part of the daily lives of artists.¹²⁸ But it bears mentioning that artists also conceived their own forms to be circulated among their peers by means of their address lists in order to collect yet another set of data.¹²⁹ Ultimately, they succeeded in inhabiting both sides of this interface between the State and their self-managed structures, as they sat on juries and held programme officer positions at the Council as of the mid-1970s.

THE END OF UTOPIA

By 1975, the Council was no longer able to limit the proliferation of artist-run structures, and therefore suspended its funding to organizations recently incorporated in order to increase the grants given to the ones that flourished at the beginning of the decade.¹³⁰

During the same period, it became apparent that there were shortcomings to the political potential of the concept of information which defined the collectivist projects of the 1960s. Several feminist artists realized that the democratic utopia of open systems inspired by

cybernetics reproduced the sexual or economic asymmetry prevailing in other sectors of society.¹³¹ By mimicking models stemming from management culture or from government agencies, it duplicated power relations that were inherent to such structures. Thus, secretarial tasks would be attributed to women members of the Intermedia Society, and management positions would be reserved to their male colleagues.

Despite the fact that Iain Baxter gave Ingrid Baxter an important role in N.E. Thing Co. as the company's co-president, the latter was not at centre stage.¹³² The couple's divorce in 1978 put an end to the corporate identity under which the company had operated since 1966.

The period between 1971 and 1974 was also the correspondence network's high point. As of 1973, this network began to deteriorate from within. Since the number of participants had increased, most of the artists who had initiated it no longer systematically responded to correspondence from their peers.

On April 5th of that year, Ray Johnson announced the death of the New York Correspondance [sic] School in the pages of the *New York Times*. General Idea followed suit in the September issue of *FILE* by publishing a letter written by Robert Cumming in which the author complained about the reception of a batch of mediocre correspondence.¹³³

In 1974, Willoughby Sharp, Lowell Darling, General Idea, and Image Bank (under the guise of Western Front) organized *Decca Dance: Art's Birthday* in Hollywood (United States). This awards ceremony was a pretext for gathering individuals and artists' collectives who had been collaborating by means of the postal system.

That same year, *FILE* updated its address and image request directories, which were being compiled since the end of the 1960s by Image Bank and General Idea.¹³⁴ Kate Craig, Michael Morris, and Vincent Trasov of the Western Front Society designed the directory's graphic layout and then sent it to General Idea. This collective undertaking represents one of the last collaborations between these artists. In subsequent issues, the magazine ceased publishing this tool and thereby signalled the dissolution of a peer community that functioned as a counterpublic.

During this period of disengagement, Time Incorporated sued General Idea for having made illicit use of the layout of *LIFE* magazine. In 1977, Image Bank organized its second postcard exhibition

¹²⁶ On the role of the form as a technology of governmentality, see: Jon Agar, *The Government Machine* (London: Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2003).

¹²⁷ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press: 1971).

¹²⁸ In 1974, General Idea received the new application form from the Ontario Arts Council accompanied by a letter informing grant applicants that this document was now adapted for data processing via computer. *Letter to M. Michael Tims (General Idea)* / Naomi G. Lightbourn, executive Secretary, Ontario Art Council, 15 January, 1974. Art Metropole fonds, Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, series 5-Art Metropole: Grants, box 2 of 4, file entitled: "Ontario Arts Council (1974-1976)."

¹²⁹ From its first years of operation, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. produced administrative tools adapted to the context of self-management. Individuals wanting to apply for an exhibition filled out a form justifying their choice of Véhicule as a venue. Véhicule also produced questionnaires to survey the community using its services, as well as cultural institutions in Montreal.

¹³⁰ See: *Artist-run Centres: Twenty Years of History 1972 to 1992* (Ottawa: Visual Arts Sector, Canada Council for the Arts, 1993).

¹³¹ As Lucy Lippard indicates, the dissolution of the Art Workers Coalition was due in large part to the feminist contingent, which created the *Woman Artist in Revolution* and the *Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee* (1970). See: Lucy Lippard, "Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York since 1969," in *Alternative Art New York (1965-1985)*, 79-114.

¹³² However, recent accounts restore the primary role she played at the time. See: "Ingrid Baxter with Grant Arnold" in *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*.

¹³³ *FILE Magazine* 2, no. 3 (September 1973), 40.

¹³⁴ *FILE Magazine* 2, no. 5 (February 1974). This number is titled "Annual Artists' Directory."

and received a formal notice from an American company bearing the same name. The two lawsuits can be explained in light of the media coverage such artists were then receiving, given their status as important protagonists in the field of contemporary Canadian art. Contrary to General Idea, who won the lawsuit and continued to publish *FILE* until 1989, Image Bank abandoned its cause and adopted the name Morris/Trasov archive.¹³⁵

HOUSE ARREST

The act of incorporating an organization as a non-profit company requires the creation of a registered office. It also implies the obligation to preserve the minutes of meetings which, by the same token, constitute an archival fonds. In the first half of the 1970s, the fonds of self-managed structures joined these residues of administrative transactions with the by-products of conceptual projects exchanged by means of the postal system.

During a certain period of time, these archives remained latent and were invisible, for the correspondence network had dissolved. This interval coincided with the return of certain art forms, such as figurative, neo-expressionist painting at the end of the 1970s and, consequently, with the demise of strategies conferring an intrinsic social value to the concept of information. The foundation of ANNPAC (1976) also put an end to the porosity between artistic practices and administration. The plain correspondence paper that was used at the time by artists/administrators to represent themselves to their peers and to the Canada Council for the Arts attests to this shift.

Throughout the 1990s, conceptual art understood as a historical movement resurfaced from this black hole and became the subject of numerous exhibitions and publications. In larger urban centres the re-evaluation of these practices facilitated the gradual incorporation of their documentary infrastructure (artists' books, videotapes, exhibition catalogues of the era) into a secondary market.¹³⁶ Parallel to this appraisal, museums and universities acquired the fonds of several artists of this generation.

Aside from the desire to make a cultural heritage more widely accessible, the motives that compelled some artists to donate their archives are complex and greatly exceed the scope of this essay.¹³⁷ Many members of this generation hoped to acquire symbolic and economic capital in exchange for a gesture effected under the sign of generosity.

However, these gifts were "performed" at the intersection of several discursive formations and can therefore not be reduced to the modalities of mere economic transactions.

Much like the translation of a text, the passage of an archival fonds from one address to another (we reiterate here the double meaning of the term "address") simultaneously produces both a gain and loss of meaning.

In this light, Nancy Ruth Bartlett contends that once a record's current use value has expired, access to archival materials depends on the interventions of various mediators. The task of preserving the meaning embedded in these fonds is taken up by archivists, art historians, and sometimes the artists themselves or even their immediate circle (peers, friends, family members, executors). The latter determine (often in constraining ways) the manner in which these materials are used. According to Bartlett, few researchers question this ideological framework.¹³⁸ However, the tension between communicational transparency and hermeticism that prevailed within twentieth-century avant-garde movements complexifies such a logic of accessibility. In this context, artists were henceforth engaged in the process of mediating their archives during their own lifetime. They set the conditions for their reception and occasionally considered them as artworks in their own right. In this framework, we will briefly analyze the way in which certain acts performed prior to the "house arrest" of archival fonds can inflect the interpretation of such documents. Far from representing items in a typology, the following examples are intricately bound up with strategies deployed within the respective practices of the artists' groups whose documents are studied.

In 1973, Martin Bartlett, Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov, Glenn Lewis, Kate Craig, Eric Metcalfe, Mo Van Nostrand, and Henry Greenshow acquired the property located at 303 East Avenue in Vancouver. This site became both a private residence and the Western Front Lodge artist-run centre (later the Western Front Society). That same year, Robert Filliou visited Vancouver to meet artists with whom he had been corresponding. During a discussion that was recorded on videotape by Paul Wong in the newly-acquired building, some key protagonists commented on an album of photographs, taken by Michael De Courcy, of the Intermedia Society's performances and events.¹³⁹ Wong's camera captured these images as close-ups. To avoid any digressions, Filliou suggested that each person's intervention be limited to factual statements about the contents of these documents. Since the tape has deteriorated over time, the close-up shots are

¹³⁵ Vincent Trasov and Michael Morris moved to Berlin in 1981.

¹³⁶ Copies of artists' books are thus re-sold in order to increase their value. As well, during the 1980s the status of video changes. Primarily used by activists and artists as a tool for the dissemination of information, the medium establishes itself as a proper art form, with its own festivals and distributors.

¹³⁷ Please note that this analysis is limited to the fonds consulted during the research phase of the three-part *Documentary Protocols* project, the content of which is represented by a significant sampling in this publication. Otherwise, other archival fonds from self-managed structures created between 1967 and 1975 are now located within Canadian museum or university collections: the Galerie Powerhouse/La Centrale fonds and the Optica fonds (Concordia University Archives); the Kensington Arts Association fonds (later the Center for Experimental Art and Communication), and York University Archives and Special Collections, among others.

¹³⁸ See: Nancy Ruth Bartlett, "Past Imperfect (*l'imparfait*): Mediating Meaning in Archives of Art" in *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, ed. Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), 121-133.

¹³⁹ *Intermedia History*/Glenn Lewis, Camera: Paul Wong, 1973, Western Front Society fonds.

now blurred, and the off-screen accounts act somewhat as captions of barely visible photographic spectres from the past. Although the artists used video to document their alternative lifestyles and ephemeral art practices, the camera functions here mainly as a means to elicit speech and to facilitate the passage of individuals from one institution (Intermedia) to another (Western Front Lodge).

A parallel can be established between the tools conceived to disseminate information (index cards, lists, etc.) within a counterpublic comprised of artists, and the methods employed for describing documents when they move towards the status of archives. In *FILE*'s inaugural issue, Morris and Trasov published an "archives index card," including blank space on which correspondents could affix their "artist's proof" and formulate a request for images. As indicated on this card, the project to assemble archives started when artists attempted to extend the reach of their network. Image Bank thereby equated the correspondence it received to a symbolic capital that one could reinvest.¹⁴⁰ Since the end of the 1960s, Trasov and Morris had been collecting their peers' "receivables" and publications on avant-garde movements after 1945.

While establishing themselves in the building of the Western Front Lodge, they continued to amass documents as an artistic strategy in unto itself. As of 1974, Trasov and Morris attempted to draw an inventory of the contents of their collection by means of index cards resembling the ones they conceived to request images. During the same period some of their colleagues (Kate Craig in particular) began to use a Portapak camera to document performance, poetry readings, and other events they organized. Image Bank's index cards were used to catalogue this documentation, thereby forming the audiovisual memory of the Western Front Lodge (in order to distinguish the centre from the collective, the name "Image Bank" was crossed out with a felt pen). The outcome of Image Bank's projects and the residues of the daily transactions of its two members were initially part of Western Front Society's archives. Their fonds was later entrusted to the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (Vancouver), but it remains the property of the artists.¹⁴¹ In 2007, the University of British Columbia Library's Rare Books and Special Collections acquired the archives of the Western Front Society (as a bequest).

The Iain Baxter fonds can be considered the exception in a typology of artists' archives. It contains the by-products of Baxter's conceptual works and the outcome of his activities as a teacher. However, these documents subsist alongside those of N.E. Thing Co. and such a porosity blurs the categories by means of which an individual's and

¹⁴⁰ In the spirit of Ray Johnson's work, the collective frequently recycles certain letters by modifying them before sending them back to their recipient.

¹⁴¹ See Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov, Morris/Trasov Archive (Berlin: self-published, 1990).

an organization's records are usually classified. Files related to the company contain heterogeneous documentary materials. Aside from the correspondence exchanged amongst the Baxters and several art world protagonists, the transactions between N.E. Thing Co. and certain provincial or municipal civil servants generated notarized deeds, minutes of meetings, etc.

In an exhibition held at the Kunsthalle Basel devoted to Canadian art (curated by Jean-Christophe Ammann), Iain and Ingrid Baxter produced a book in order to assemble documentary evidence of N.E. Thing Co.'s trajectory since the company's inception.¹⁴² Within this publication, which resembles a *catalogue raisonné* that is nonetheless presented as one of the artists' works, the chaotic burgeoning of the company's activities is subjected to the logic of information sheets that are printed full-page. Such sheets link relics of micro-events taken from the Baxters' everyday existence to the outcome of conceptual propositions, produced or not.¹⁴³ The couple often added descriptive captions to the sheets in an area reserved for this purpose in order to provide a basis for a cumulative narrative on their life path both as a collective and nuclear family. The chronological sequence ends in 1977, the year prior to the couple's divorce and the dissolution of N.E. Thing Co. This separation also produced a caesura within the structure of the archival fonds amassed by the couple. Since Iain Baxter absorbed the company's records, co-president Ingrid Baxter's share was left in a grey zone. In 1992, Iain Baxter attempted to circumscribe once more the material components of the communicational infrastructure he forged. Art Metropole organized an exhibition that brought together business cards, correspondence paper, pins, etc. that were circulated by the collective as multiples. Much like the 1977 book, the publication produced for this project is comparable in form and scope to a *catalogue raisonné*.¹⁴⁴

Before the donation of the fonds to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Baxter sorted its contents chronologically to facilitate the creation of a preliminary finding aid. Correlatively, most of the files were no longer related to given projects. Documents from one year of artistic activity were randomly filed (the key year of 1969 alone contains four folders). Baxter did not impose any restrictions on the reproduction and dissemination of the documentary portions of his work, as can be gauged from *The N.E. Thing Co. Book and Media Works*, which tacitly grant readers permission to make use of the materials. In this way, Baxter brings to the fore the ethical implications of the subsequent transmission of his archives according to the democratic spirit of his practice in the 1960s and 1970s.

¹⁴² *Kanadische Kunstler* (Basel: Kunsthalle Basel, 1977).

¹⁴³ See: *The N.E. Thing Co. Ltd Book* (Vancouver and Basel: N.E. Thing Co., Kunsthalle Basel, 1978).

¹⁴⁴ Iain Baxter, *Media Works: N.E. Thing Co. LTD*. (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1992).

Among the acts that mediate an archival fonds prior to its domiciliation, the constitution of a preliminary inventory (or finding aid) links facts stemming from the biographical trajectory of a given collective or individual to a dispersed documentary mass. Although such "paratexts" are used by researchers for a certain amount of time, they are then atomized into modular data in the fields of computerized catalogues while becoming part and parcel of the fonds itself. Thus, they exist in a discursive field lying at the interstice between the place in which the fonds initially resided and the institution that ultimately houses it.

Michael Morris and Vincent Trasov catalogued their own documents to which they ascribed accession numbers. General Idea, however, chose to delegate this task to a close collaborator, Fern Bayer, an art historian specializing in the collective's work.¹⁴⁵ By forging an ad hoc method, Bayer did not strictly follow the standards of archival description, whose logic of condensation usually allows for the synthesis of information, from the general to the particular.¹⁴⁶ The level of detail contained in this preliminary inventory of the General Idea fonds thus often superimposes the map over the entire territory to be charted, and sometimes even adds complementary micro-stories. Aside from the institutional requirements pertaining to the appraisal of this fonds' patrimonial and fair market values, such a proliferation of narratives brings to the fore the archivist's presence as both reader and writer rather than as neutral mediator. Contrary to Image Bank, General Idea defined the entire span of its published projects – some of which were initially disseminated within correspondence networks – as multiples. These limited edition issues were later brought together in the guise of a *catalogue raisonné*.¹⁴⁷

In a proposal submitted to the Ontario Arts Council in April 1974 in order to obtain a start-up grant for Art Metropole, the collective made known that it intended to pursue the project of collecting publications, videos, and other by-products of conceptual practices until 1984. That year represented a cut-off date beyond which time "the collection [would] be permanently preserved at a designated location."¹⁴⁸ As had been mentioned previously, this date is also endowed with a symbolic value, for it is a temporal marker acting as common ground for the correspondence network's members.

A chronological reading of General Idea's archival fonds supports the hypothesis that the collective did not maintain antagonistic relations with museums. Two days after the artist-run structure's opening on the 26th of October, manager Robert Handforth wrote a response to

J. Hunter, a librarian at the National Gallery of Canada who requested information on Art Metropole. Handforth suggested that Hunter obtain the sample of publications inventoried in the organization's first catalogue.¹⁴⁹ In 1999, art patron Jay A. Smith acquired AA Bronson's Art Metropole collection and donated it to the museum. The General Idea fonds itself was loaned by Bronson to the same institution for an indeterminate duration.

In the introduction to the catalogue published in conjunction with the collection's inaugural exhibition, entitled *Top 100* (2006), Smith describes the collection as a "museum within a museum."¹⁵⁰ The exhibition's curators Kitty Scott and Jonathan Shaughnessy conclude that "it is fitting that this collection has a permanent home at the National Gallery of Canada."¹⁵¹ Their narrative thus likens the collection's "house arrest" to a step in a logical process: the institution represents the documents' ultimate address and, correspondingly, the site in which they will henceforth be interpreted.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONTRACTS

In a 1999 talk, Ken Lum spoke of the 1980s as a time when Canadian artists could fully benefit from the "granting complex."¹⁵² During this period artists would receive grants to produce works, as well as travel grants to exhibit them from one artist-run centre to the next. Later, they were eligible to submit these same works to the acquisitions committee of the Canada Council's Art Bank, whose members (also peers) were artists who represented all regions of Canada. Upon the reimbursement of the money transacted and certain administrative fees, they could even recuperate the purchased object at the end of the process.

Although Lum does not address this question, the donation of archival fonds by artists stemming from the generation that witnessed the creation of these structures closes the circuit. As a second incorporation, this "change of address" symbolically seals the contract the artists had signed with the State in the beginning of the 1970s.

From this "cradle to coffin scenario," Lum posits that a – initially legitimate – will to self-determination became increasingly bureaucratic and ultimately absorbed all functions assigned to experts (critics, historians) who usually evaluate the legitimacy of artworks. A consequence of this, according to Lum, is an undermining of the writing of this history by devaluing the opinions of non-artists.

¹⁴⁵ Fern Bayer co-organized their retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario and co-edited the *catalogue raisonné* of their multiples.

¹⁴⁶ See: "Rules for Archival Description, Ottawa," Canadian Council of Archives 2007 (accessed by the author on 9 October 2009): [http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/f-public_free.html].

¹⁴⁷ *General Idea Editions 1967-1995*, ed. Barbara Fischer (Toronto: Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, 2003).

¹⁴⁸ Grant application to the Ontario Arts Council/Robert Handforth (Art Metropole), April 30, 1974. Art Metropole fonds, Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Series 5, Box 2, file titled "Ontario Arts Council (1974-1976)."

¹⁴⁹ Letter to J. Hunter (librarian at the National Gallery of Canada)/Robert Handforth (Art Metropole), October 28, 1974. Art Metropole Documentary file, Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁵⁰ *Art Metropole. The Top 100*, ed. Kitty Scott and Jonathan Shaughnessy (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 4.

¹⁵¹ Kitty Scott, Jonathan Shaughnessy, "An introduction to the collection of Art Metropole," 99.

¹⁵² Ken Lum, "Canadian Cultural Policy: A Metaphysical Problem" (paper presented in Wrocław, Poland, in June 1999, available on the website of Apexart Gallery, New York) (accessed by the author on 1st October 2009): [http://www.apexart.org/conference/lum.htm].

In contrast, Clive Robertson reflects on how certain historians have overemphasized critical discourse around failed utopias of the 1960s and 1970s. When they describe the shortcomings of conceptualism, which was “colonized by its own bureaucratic tendencies,” they are also cautious with respect to the project of transforming the commodity status of art into a service-oriented process.¹⁵³ According to Robertson, such a denigration of administration stems from a residual modernism in which one still establishes clear borders between aesthetic positions and political activism.

By creating organizations according to a model of self-determination, Canadian artists attempted to undermine widespread beliefs concerning their abilities to administer institutions – thereby labouring in terrain that was reserved for the cultural elite. The period in which this paradigm of self-determination was initially tested set the stage for the infrastructure in which they would later work during the following decades; however, such a striving for autonomy implied an increasing dependence on granting agencies. Paradoxically, a gift economy still prevails as the mode of compensation for the scarcity of financial resources.

Feeling excluded from the meritocracy of the “granting complex” and attempting to circumvent bureaucracy, young artists now create flexible structures to distribute their work (galleries, publications) that are analogous to the first artist-run centres. The way in which they manipulate files on Web-based peer-to-peer platforms also recalls the strategy of using the postal system against the grain, as well as the previous generation’s exploitation of the cable network to create a counterpublic.

As Ève Chiapello and Luc Boltanski have noted, corporations from the tertiary sector incorporated entire segments of the “artist-based critique” of the May ’68 uprisings in view of updating human resources management models originating in the industrial period.¹⁵⁴ By affording employees a certain amount of self-determination in the definition of their tasks, these companies absorbed the 1960s project of emancipation, thereby neutralizing their adversaries. Chiapello and Boltanski contend that this artistic subjectivity, which eludes the principle of supply and demand, ultimately becomes endowed with a surplus value within a system of exchange where knowledge is regarded as a commodity. However, they fail to address the way in which artists have conceived more complex representations of labour as this regime of cognitive capitalism took shape. By identifying themselves with the figure of the service provider,

¹⁵³ Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administration of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2006), 2.

¹⁵⁴ See Ève Chiapello and Luc Boltanski, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2006).

these artists extended the social reach of their practice and granted themselves agency at the periphery of the art world. It would seem that this situation is particularly applicable to the Canadian scenario in which governmental agencies that support culture have adapted to this epistemological rupture. Thus, when artists were “interpellated” by civil servants working for the Local Initiatives Programme, which was conceived to counter unemployment, they forged professional categories that were radically different from representations of their agency within the social order of the 1970s. Instead of offering aesthetic experiences, they responded to the program’s mandate and created ad hoc systems to chart the information that flowed between various communities existing beyond their circle of peers. In this sense, their undertakings within the tertiary sector represent a form of “immaterial” labour that was prescient of the category itself.

However, one should beware of adopting a structural, rather than historical, approach to the understanding of the radicalism of strategies stemming from artistic practice in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is necessary to assess the accounts of artists and their archives for the outcome of this period’s undertakings to be transmitted in a complex way, thereby disclosing their effects on the present. Since artists were under pressure to find an adequate place to make their archival fonds perennial, they did not always assess the consequences of housing it within institutions endorsing the privatization of collective memory. The web of constraints that limit the work of researchers (and sometimes that of artists) when they attempt to disseminate the contents of these fonds shows to what extent the writing of history requires a considerable economic investment.

The concept of an “inter-generational contract” designates a relation of co-dependence by virtue of which one generation must honour its debts to its predecessors, for the latter are the creators of a common good from which the younger generation profits, sometimes unconsciously. This concept also encompasses this generation’s responsibility to pass down such resources to the following one. Jan Verwoert subverts this definition (stemming from the social sciences) to address the complex economical infrastructure of inter-generational communications within the art world.¹⁵⁵

However, this concept’s semantic ambiguity (simultaneously a tacit agreement and an obligation) limits its heuristic potential. The commitments made by these age groups often produce quantifiable cultural capital instead of sharing experiences and knowledge. Thus,

¹⁵⁵ Jan Verwoert, “On Future Histories: And the Generational Contract with the No Longer and Not Yet Living and the Pan-Demonium of Irreverent Styles of Nostalgia” in *Questioning History: Imagining the Past in Contemporary Art*, (Rotterdam: NAI, 2008), 90-99.

a younger artist can bring forth the accomplishments of a forgotten elder to curators, art dealers, and critics by citing them in his or her own work.¹⁵⁶ All parties involved profit from such a process, since it legitimizes the senior artist's practice, while the relevance of the younger artist's offerings is underscored. In circumventing this process, certain artists have chosen to make themselves less visible in order to absorb the effects of the art market on the transmission of historical materials.

James Hoff and Miriam Katzeff founded Primary Information in 2006 in order to put documents published mainly in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s back into circulation. The collective's moniker recalls Seth Siegelaub's postulate according to which the experience of certain conceptual works can be conveyed in printed form, thereby short-circuiting the need for their *secondary* mediation in art magazines or even exhibitions. Hoff and Katzeff update Siegelaub's concept, this time by defining the accessibility of these publications in terms of affordable facsimiles or files, which one can download from their Web site.¹⁵⁷ Although the range of items offered is limited, the act of disseminating documents which are now sold for high prices or relegated to museum storerooms could be seen as the enactment point of real filiations between the collective's aesthetic or political preoccupations and those of artists from a previous generation.

The strategies deployed in *Documentary Protocols* subscribe to a similar program. However, the question pertaining to the publication of archives, which changes their status, has been addressed here more directly. Originally distributed to a restricted number of people, only to find themselves later housed within the collections of heritage preservation societies, the documents brought together in the following pages will now be interpreted by another community of readers. This renewed condition of reception becomes particularly meaningful here, because the accessibility of some reproduced items were first restricted to the framework of a counterpublic (for instance, Image Bank's and Michael Goldberg's lists).

Thus, one must differentiate between the documents' various modes of address by meticulously identifying the entire range of individuals and groups which they "interpellated" in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the conditions of their subsequent mediation. The following samples devoted to each group of artists are ordered chronologically. However, their contents can be approached conceptually along a synchronic axis, thereby revealing the effects of gestures originating within the limits of administrative writing or in shared communicational

situations. The artists also added a reflexive component to their new role as cultural workers, which they bestowed upon themselves by shifting, within their practice, certain performative functions related to the daily management of their structures.

To interpret these archives, ad hoc methodologies must be established, which will allow for these discursive constellations to inflect the act of narrating history. The selection of documents from the sampling originated above all from research I undertook when organizing parts I and II of *Documentary Protocols*. Yet it would not have been possible to produce this publication without encompassing other points of view. Most of the authors chosen to contribute case studies were already acquainted with the projects and theoretical issues they address in their respective texts. Although many of them consulted archival fonds, they had access to a relevant portion of the primary materials as photocopies when beginning to write their essays. One constraint I did impose was that they approach these sources as objects of analysis rather than as mere evidence that would allow them to demonstrate a thesis or a retrospective fiction. Without foregrounding the question of archives per se, their texts address phenomena and events whose transmission ultimately rests on these documentary artefacts.

Although the following selection of archival items is intricately bound up with the critical apparatus that encompasses the present publication as a whole, it should be apprehended independently from the case studies. However, the reader may establish links between these interpretations and reproduced or transcribed items. Nevertheless, their sequencing generates a text whose articulations can be grasped from one sample to the next, thereby endowing them with a certain autonomy.

¹⁵⁶ On the economic dimension of the phenomenon of reference in contemporary art, see *Texte Zur Kunst*, no. 71 (September 2008). Issue title: "Artists' Artists".

¹⁵⁷ Primary Information works closely with artists without ever bypassing the question of intellectual property. See in this publication the essay by Primary Information, "That Was Then ... That is Now: Redistributing the Art Workers Coalition". Other collectives distribute artists' publications from the 1960s and 70s in a similar fashion. In 2003, Continuous Project, formed by Bettina Funcke, Wade Guyton, Joseph Logan and Seth Price, made available the first issue of *Avalanche* in the form of photocopies sold by the Maccarone Gallery (New York) at its original price at the time of its publication (1970).

DOCUMENTARY PROTOCOLS
(1967-1975)

DOCUMENTARY
PROTOCOLS (1967-1975)

PROTOCOLS DOCUMENTAIRES
(1967-1975)

PROTOCOLS
DOCUMENTAIRES (1967-1975)

PROTOCOLS

DOCUMENTAIRES (1967-1975)

DOCUMENTARY

PROTOCOLS (1967-1975)

DOCUMENTS

ART WORKERS' COALITION

N.E. THING CO.

JOYCE WIELAND

INTERMEDIA SOCIETY

A SPACE

VÉHICULE ART (MONTRÉAL) INC.

GENERAL IDEA/ART METROPOLE

IMAGE BANK

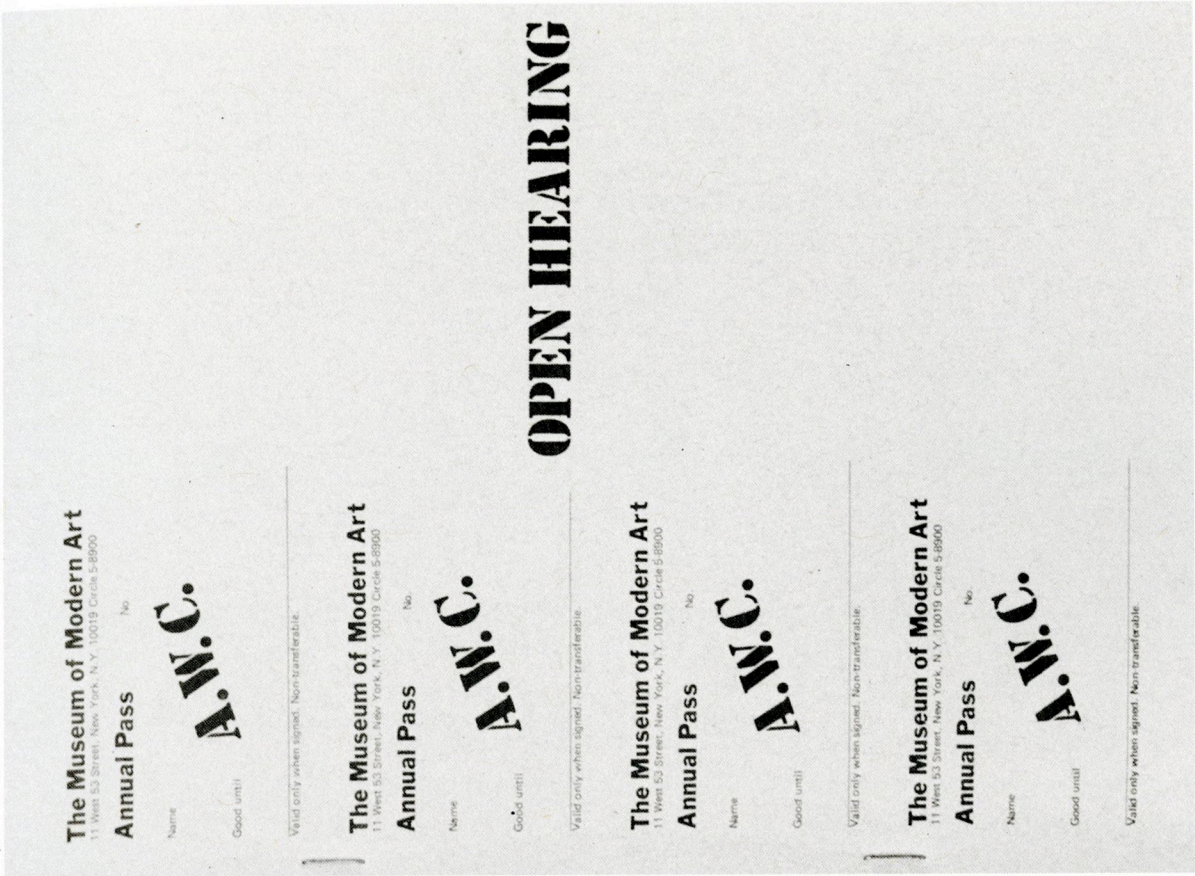
WESTERN FRONT SOCIETY

GLENN LEWIS

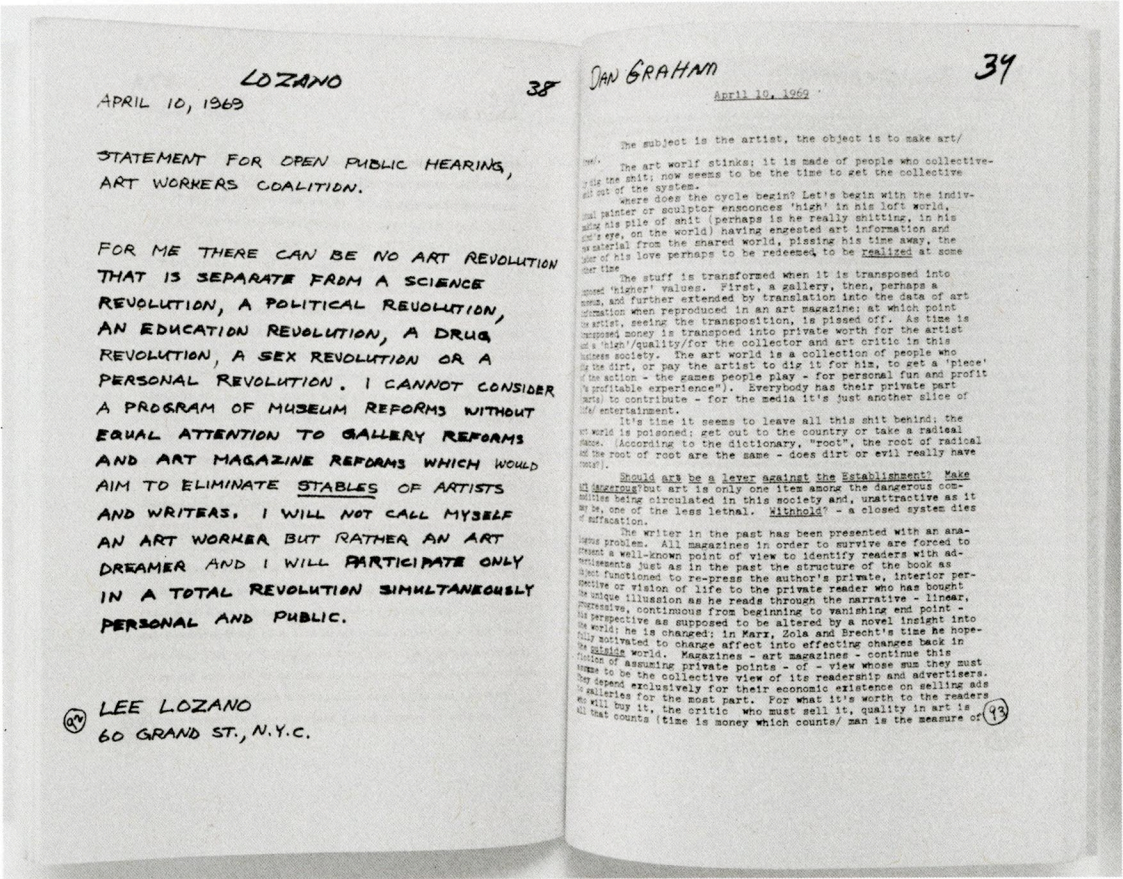
MICHAEL GOLDBERG

VIDÉOGRAPHE

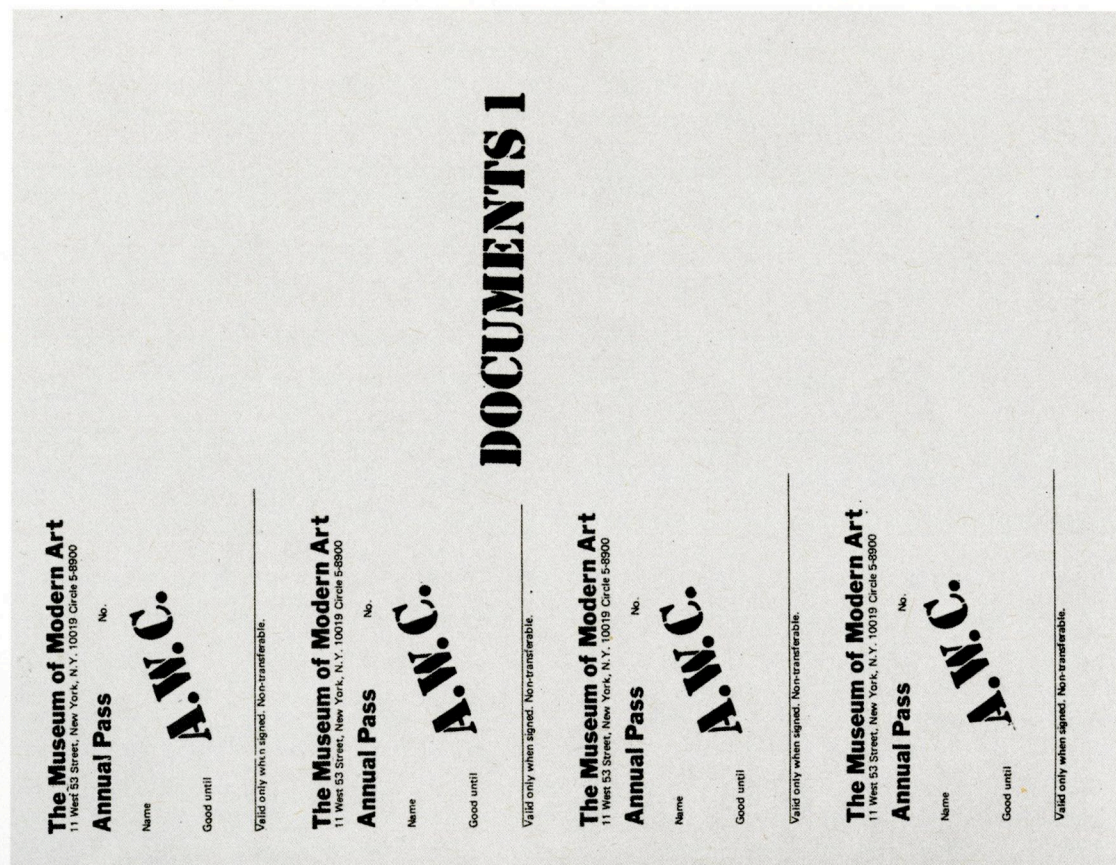
- 01 "Open Hearing" / New York: Art Workers' Coalition, 1969, 142 pp.
- 02 "Documents 1" / New York: Art Workers' Coalition, 1969; facsimile produced by Primary Information in 2008, 117 pp.



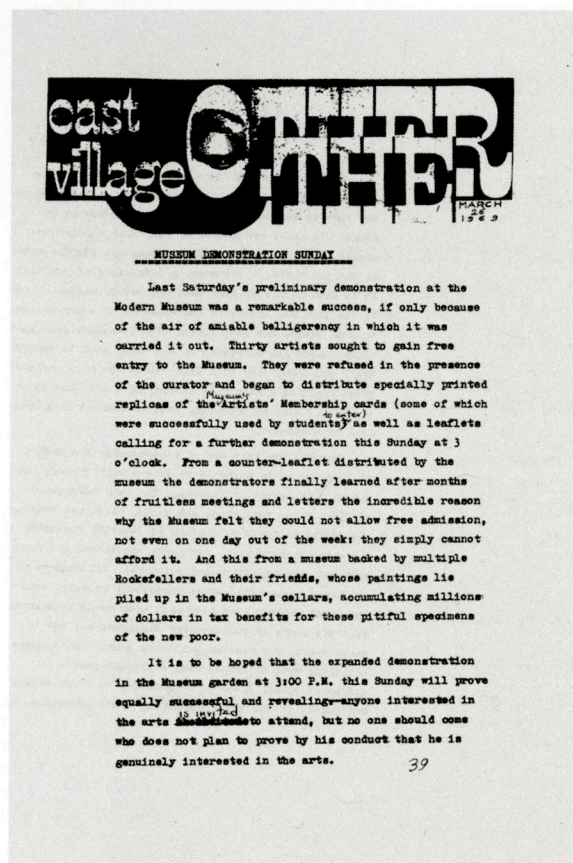
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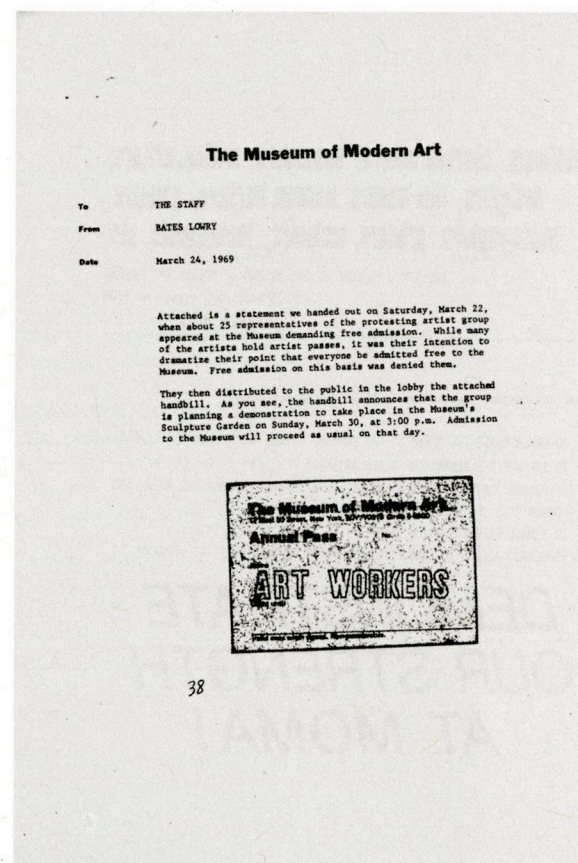
01.02



02.01



02.02



02.03

- 01 Handwritten notes on the N.E. Thing Co. / Iain Baxter, October 28, 1966, [1 p.]. Box 6, file 3, Iain Baxter fonds, gift of Iain Baxter, 2000, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
- 02 N.E. Baxter Thing Co. business card / Iain Baxter, 1966, edition of 250. Collection of Iain Baxter.
- 03 N.E. Baxter Thing Co. business card and label for displayed art works / Iain Baxter, 1966, edition of 500. Collection of Iain Baxter.
- 04 "Concept Coming on New Causes...." / Iain Baxter, c. 1967, [1 p.]. Box 7, file 1, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 05 "NOW.... Metered Mail for the Smallest Office: The New, Low Cost Model DM-3 Postage Meter...." / Stamford: Pitney Bowes, c. 1967. Box 7, file 11, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 06 Invitation for the exhibition "Products" at the Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., [November 18 – December 31, 1968] printed on an envelope and addressed to Dennis Young [returned to sender] / N.E. Thing Co., 1968. Box 9, file 5, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 07 Memorandum to Lucy Lippard / N.E. Thing Co., October 17, 1968, [1 p.]. Box 11, file 7, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 08 "Memorandum of Association of N.E. Thing Co." / N.E. Thing Co., January 16, 1969, [1 p.]. Box 9, file 18, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 09 N.E. Thing Co. envelope [09.01 unmarked, and 09.02 with Iain Baxter's doodles] / N.E. Thing Co., Allan Fleming [graphic design], 1969. Box 9, file 19, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 10 "N.E. Thing CO. TRANSV. S.I. INFORM.... title: 'Company Logo and Everyone in the Room, May 18, 1969'...." / N.E. Thing Co., 1969. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont., June 4-July 6, 1969 [organized by Pierre Théberge]. Exhibition records, file no. 1343, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 11 Sketch of the "Environment's" floor plan / Iain Baxter, May 1969, [1 p.]. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

- 12 Installation of the "Environment" / photographer unknown [National Gallery of Canada], 1969, black and white photographic print. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 13 View of the "Environment" [security guard in the lobby] / photographer unknown [National Gallery of Canada], 1969, black and white photographic print. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 14 View of the "Environment" [secretarial aisle] / photographer unknown [National Gallery of Canada], 1969, black and white photographic print. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 15 View of the "Environment" [Lorne Building's façade with N.E. Thing Co.'s signage] / photographer unknown [National Gallery of Canada], 1969, Polaroid print. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 16 View of the "Environment" [waiting area] / photographer unknown [National Gallery of Canada], 1969, black and white photographic print. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 17 View of the "Environment" [office of the President] / photographer unknown [National Gallery of Canada], 1969, Polaroid print. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 18 "President's Message - Message du président" [sheet filled in by a viewer] / Iain Baxter, [2 pp.]. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 19 Message to Pierre Elliott Trudeau / Iain Baxter, June 20, 1969, [2 pp.]. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 20 "N.E. Thing Co. ART. No. 9" ["All Men Are to Recognize and Note for Posterity that Art no. 9 Fountain in Ottawa Mall, Ottawa, Ontario, Ont. Canada..."] / N.E. Thing Co., 1969. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

- 21 "N.E. Thing Co. ACT. No. 122" ["Rain Runs on Sides of National Arts Centre Building: Nothing Else..."] / N.E. Thing Co., 1969. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 22 "Outward 453-8-69" [office furniture used in the N.E. Thing Co. "Environment" exhibition], August 19, 1969, [1 p.]. Records of the exhibition "The N.E. Thing Company Limited," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 23 "1970 International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition, Seattle" [exhibitor's contract for space filled by Iain Baxter] / Minneapolis: Data Processing Management Association, 1970, [2 pp.]. Box 12, file 20, Iain Baxter fonds, gift of Iain Baxter, 2000, E.P. Taylor Library and archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
- 24 Supplement from Newsweek on "International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition, Seattle.... June 23-26, 1970" / Minneapolis: Data Processing Management Association, 1970, [leaflet]. Box 12, file 20, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 25 "International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition" [N.E. Thing Co.'s booth and view of the fair] / N.E. Thing Co., 2 color slides. Iain Baxter collection.
- 26 "INFORMATION about N.E. THING: 'Network' 70" / N.E. Thing Co., 1970, [10 p.]. Box 12, file 21, Iain Baxter fonds.
- 27 Invitation to an exhibition at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA / N.E. Thing Co., October 1970, [1 p.]. Box 15, file 20, Iain Baxter fonds.

Ideas.

OCT 28/66

N.E. BAXTER THING & CO (OCT. 1965)

company to allow artistic works to be produced
~ published. is made up of a # of departments

departments called

Thing Department
Duplication "
Cap "
Publishing "

N. E. BAXTER THING CO.

THINGS and SERVICES

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IAIN BAXTER, President
224-6736

4564 West 1st Avenue
VANCOUVER 8, B.C.
CANADA

N. E. BAXTER THING CO.

DEPARTMENT: _____

ITEM: _____

PRICE: _____

Things and Services - Anything Does It

PRESIDENT:
IAIN BAXTER

1419 RIVERSIDE DR.
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.
CANADA. Ph: 929-3662

c o n c e p t
comming on new causes effecting profound thinking
energizing perceptual thinking
equalling pointed thinking

Concept Art- or (noname monster)

Concept Art- Visual Sensitivity Information (VSI)
refers to visual informers, making VSI seen.

Concept Art is another example of a name applied quickly and superficially to
name a movement or phenomenon, then pidgeon hole it, then move on to new art
try to grab ahold of a movement or phenomenon in art, when in fact it is the word art
frontiers itself that is in question. And the concepts that are going on in spite of art
are what is happening. *Sensitively Informer Dynamics*

THE ART OF CONCEPTS IS MORE TO THE (POINT) (PERIOD) THAN THE NARROW VIEW OF CONCEPT ART
Art of concepts is more the viewpoint than the narrow view of concept art.
Art of concepts is more the viewpoint than the narrow view seen by CONCEPT ART.

For New York to conceptually plug in it must plug out.

CA - is a presence or state of mind about anything information communicating the
connected sensitiveness in visual terms appropriate to its energy.

here some thoughts on what happens currently in visual art

CA - (scrap the name) and lets call the phenomenon Information Flow *Visual Sensitivity Information*. *IFVSI, VSeve*

Concept Art - is all about comprehensive generalist thinking, communication,
distance, instantaneousness, information, (information, ideas,
connectability, and,
All rolled up into one to knock out the word Concept Art, which
doesn't apply. It is better to have confusion than all is fit

CA/
Concept Art- It is better to have confusion than anything will fit

Concept Art or Miss Appellation, if your really in the know, has been around for
a long time. CA is nothing other than handling anything with sensitivity and
a sense of information.

CA- of course its gone a long ways, and it will continue to do so because it likes
to travel and it understands why
- takes itself information
- gives nothing to hand on to but mind you gives something

Concept Art is the mental representation of anything visual.
Concept Art is visably anything conceived in the minds eye.
Concept Art is the first origin of anything
is the visually first origin of anything with fallout information.
hanging on the side for all to take.
part-take.

Concept Art is Theory, method, and philosophy all rolled up in something atistically concept

CA is the working of one information upon another for anythings thats possible
CA is anything within which the concept or idea is more important and where the visual is
secondary or non-existent.

01

02

03

04

N. E. THING CO.
1419 RIVERSIDE DRIVE
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY,
BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRODUCTS

NOV. 18 - DEC. 31, 1968
LOCATION INFORMATION AVAILABLE
AT THEATRE OFFICE, S. F. U.

*D.J.
There was
nothing in
this envelope
(it was not
sealed)*

Dennis Young
Curator Mod. Art
ART Gallery of Ontario
Grange Park
TORONTO ZB, ONT

VANCOUVER
10 PM
NOV 18
1968
CANADA

VANCOUVER
BRITISH COLUMBIA
NOV 18 1968

DEFEAT
MUSCULAR
DYSTROPHY

NOW...metered mail for the smallest office

AD RATE AD HERE
STAMP HERE
NETCO NETCO

Put anything HERE

Anything goes HERE

Anything is here

HERE GOES ANYTHING

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Done by Simon Fraser University

USE

THE NEW, LOW COST Model DM-3 POSTAGE METER

Pitney-Bowes brings the "big business" benefits of metered mail to even the smallest firms

FILED AND REGISTERED
JAN 16 1969
A. H. HALL,
REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES

"COMPANIES ACT"

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION
OF
N. E. THING CO. LTD.

For the Province of British Columbia

2. The registered office of the Company is N.E. THING CO. LTD.
in the Municipality of North Vancouver, in the Province of
British Columbia.

3. (a) The objects for which the Company is established
are:

- (i) to produce sensitivity information;
- (ii) to provide a consultation and evaluation
service with respect to things:
 - (iii) to produce, manufacture, import, export, buy,
sell and otherwise deal in things of all kinds.
- (b) As ancillary and incidental only to the objects of
the Company set forth in parts (i) to (iii) of sub-
clause (a) above, the Company shall also have the
following powers:
 - (i) for the purpose of receiving or improving returns
from any real property held by the Company, either
directly or through agents or contractors, to
erect thereon or construct, assemble, equip,
decorate, furnish, alter, repair, pull down and
restore buildings and structures of all kinds
and to supply or cause to be supplied thereto
electric light, heat, gas, water and other
utilities;
 - (ii) to guarantee and otherwise assist in the per-
formance of contracts or mortgages of persons,
firms or corporations with whom the Company may

(RETAIN THIS COPY FOR FOLLOWUP)

FROM **N. E. THING CO.**
LUCY LIPPARD
46 GRAND
N.Y. N.Y.C.

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

DATE **OCT 17/68**
SUBJECT **INFORMATION RE:**

Company Departments are as follows:

THING DEPARTMENT	THING DEPARTMENT
PROJECTS DEPARTMENT	IMAGINARY THING PROJECTS DEPARTMENT
SERVICE DEPARTMENT	SERVICE DEPARTMENT
PHOTO DEPARTMENT	PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT
PRINTING DEPARTMENT	PRINTING DEPARTMENT
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT	RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
FILM DEPARTMENT	FILM DEPARTMENT
COP DEPARTMENT	COP DEPARTMENT
ACT DEPARTMENT	ACT DEPARTMENT

BEING MADE
BEING MADE
BEING MADE

USE LOWER PORTION FOR REPLY

WILLIAMS & MACKIE LTD.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

N. E. THING COMPANY LIMITED

1419 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NORTH VANCOUVER 272, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, CABLE ADDRESS: "ANYTHING" (604) 929-3662

09.01

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN
Start Transcription

AIRMAIL

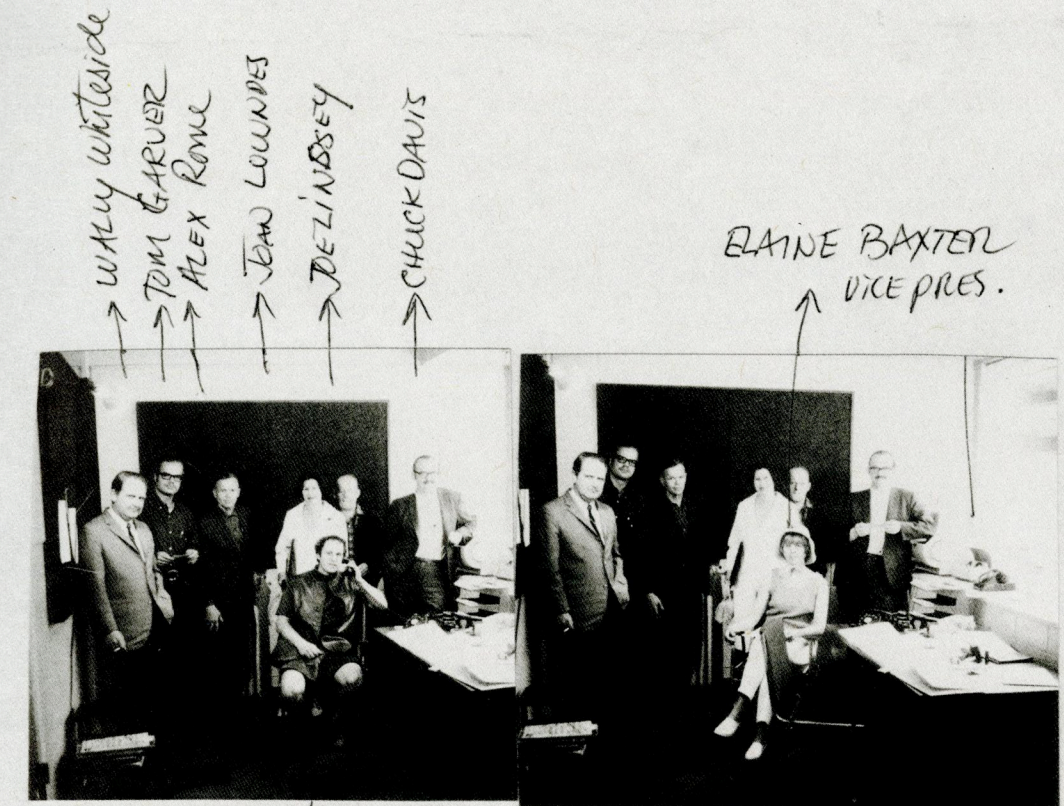
N. E. THING COMPANY LIMITED

TO: **SETH SIEGAL**
1100 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK 10028
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

(Publicity)

1419 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NORTH VANCOUVER 272, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, CABLE ADDRESS: "ANYTHING" (604) 929-3662

09.02



IAIN BAXTER
PRES, NETCO

ELAINE BAXTER
VICE PRES.

N. E. THING CO. TRANSV.S.I. INFORM

TITLE **COMPANY LOGO AND EVERYONE IN THE ROOM. MAY 18/69**

PRODUCER **NETCO**

TRANSMISSION RECEIVING

PLACE **Vancouver** PLACE **New York**

TIME **3:45 PM Pacific** TIME

BY **TELECOPIER** BY

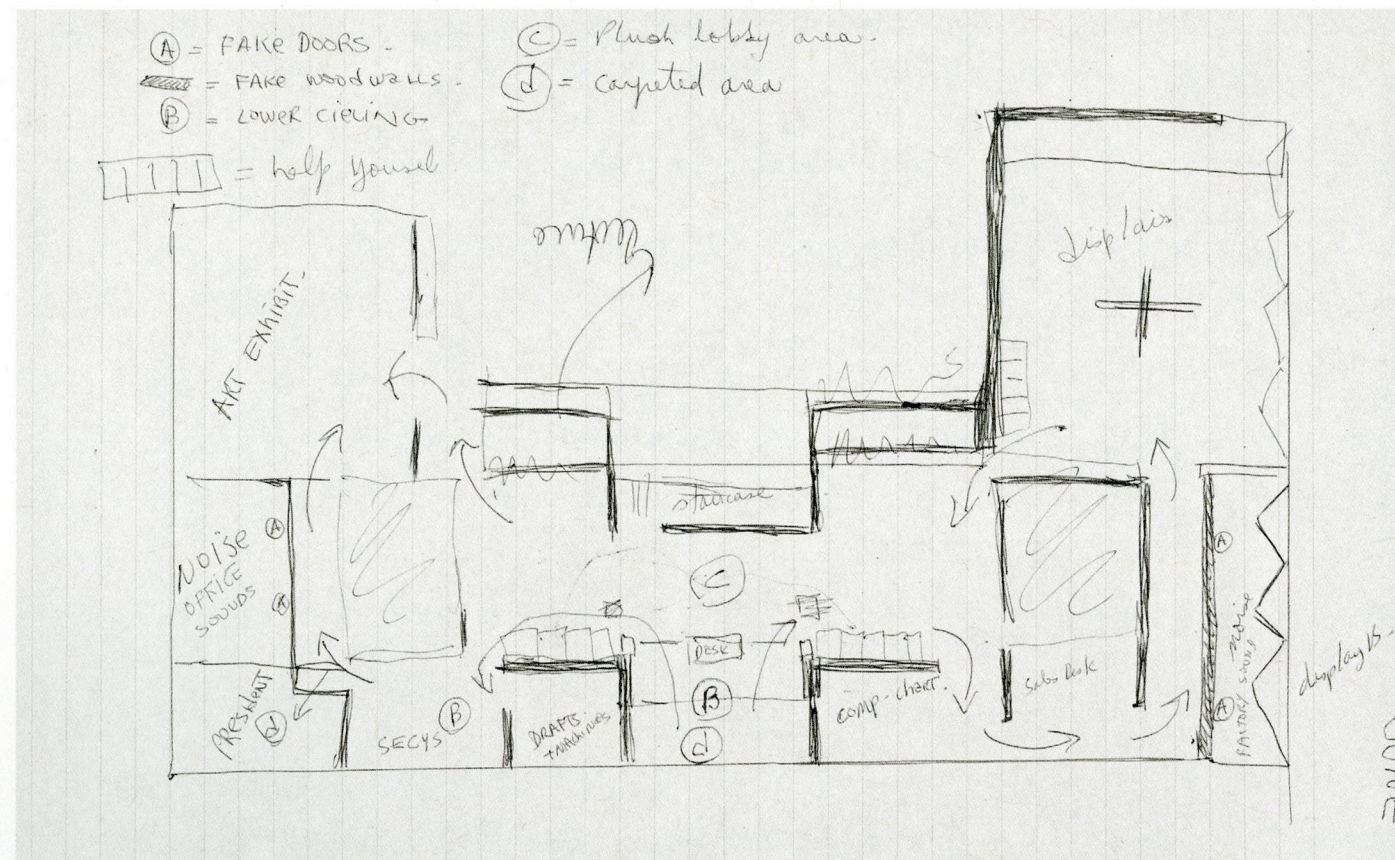
BY **Sent by Western Reproducer by Facsend**

TRANSMISSION BY **Facsend**

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N. E. THING COMPANY LIMITED

10





15



16



17

SOME OF MR BAXTER'S STATEMENTS
ARE INCOMPREHENSIBLE!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE MESSAGE DU PRESIDENT

As a company vitally involved with sensitivity information, the C'est en tant que compagnie impliquée de façon vitale dans le N. E. THING CO. offers this display to the many millions of people domaine de l'information sensitive que la N. E. THING CO. offre who see. It is the visual unknown that challenges the N. E. cette présentation aux millions de gens qui voient.

THING researchers. Like researchers anywhere, they seek to C'est l'inconnu visuel qui lance un défi aux chercheurs de la add to the world's store of knowledge — by exploratory research N. E. THING CO. Comme partout ailleurs, ces chercheurs cher- on the frontiers of basic theory, by product research for results chent à ajouter à la connaissance mondiale par une recherche in specific, tangible forms, by production research for processes exploratrice aux frontières de la théorie fondamentale, par une that yield precise end-products. These probings of the why and recherche dans les produits pour trouver des résultats dans des how of visual ings and their combinations are efforts to discover formes spécifiquement tangibles, et par une recherche dans distinct properties or effects and the means of putting them into la production pour trouver des processus qui produiront des operation. This, the research contribution to the N. E. THING produits précis comme fin. Ces coups de sonde dans le pourquoi CO.'s progress, grows from imagination, intuitive daring, and et le comment des choses visuelles et leur combinaison sont des persistence as well as technical competence.

efforts pour découvrir des qualités ou des effets propres et pour découvrir les moyens de les mettre en fonctionnement. C'est bien cette contribution de la recherche au progrès de la N. E. THING CO. qui doit son origine à l'imagination, à l'audace intui- tive et à la persévérance ainsi qu'à la compétence technique.

Jim Baxter

PRESIDENT

This type of show probably would be
more fitting for a Pavilion of Industrial design
or "Social Science"

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

J. Halton
Wall Gellert

The National Gallery of Canada will publish a complete report, at the end of the display, on the activities of the N. E. THING CO. in Ottawa and the outlying regions. Please write to the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa 4, Ontario, for information on the publication of the report.

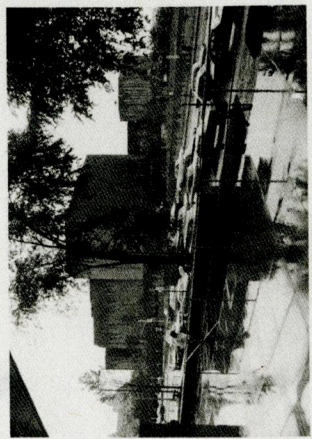
La Galerie nationale du Canada publiera, à la fin de cette présentation, un rapport complet et détaillé sur les activités de la N. E. THING CO. à Ottawa et dans les régions environnantes. Veuillez écrire à la Galerie nationale du Canada, Ottawa 4, Ontario, pour des renseignements sur la publication du rapport.

N. E. THING COMPANY LIMITED

18.01

N. E. THING CO.

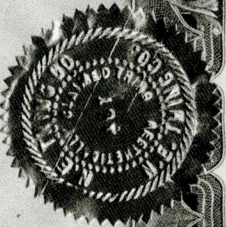
ACT



ALL MEN ARE TO RECOGNIZE AND NOTE FOR POSTERITY THAT:
ACT# 122 - Pain Runs on sides of National Arts Centre
Building: Nothing else (1969)

ON THIS	11th	DAY OF	June	19 69	HAS
---------	------	--------	------	-------	-----

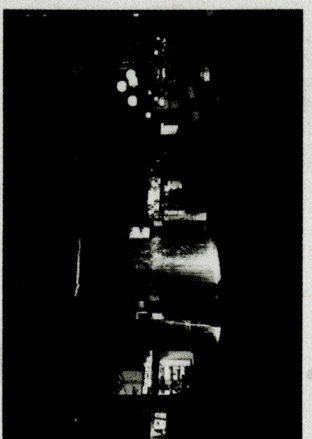
MET THE STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS OF SENSITIVITY
INFORMATION AS SET FORTH BY THE N. E. THING CO.
IT IS HEREBY AND HENCEFORTH ELEVATED FOR ETERNITY TO
THE REALM OF AESTHETICALLY CLAIMED THINGS.
IT IS TO BE KNOWN FROM THIS DAY ON BY ALL MEN AS AN ACT.
* THE N. E. THING CO. RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REDO OR
DUPLICATE ANY ACT AS A FUTURE PROJECT.



SIGNED, PRESIDENT, IAIN BAXTER
N. E. THING CO.
ACT DEPARTMENT

N. E. THING CO.

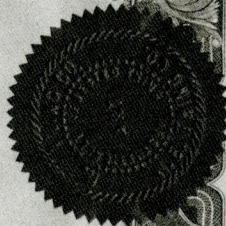
ART



ALL MEN ARE TO RECOGNIZE AND NOTE FOR POSTERITY THAT:
ART # 9 - Fountain (aluminum) in Ottawa Mall, Ottawa, Ont.
Canada (1969)

ON THIS	8 th	DAY OF	June	19 69	HAS NOT
---------	------	--------	------	-------	---------

MET THE STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS ON SENSITIVITY
INFORMATION AS SET FORTH BY THE N. E. THING CO.
IT IS HEREBY AND HENCEFORTH BANISHED FOR ETERNITY TO
THE RANK AND FILE OF AESTHETICALLY REJECTED THINGS.
IT IS TO BE KNOWN FROM THIS DAY ON BY ALL MEN AS ART.



SIGNED, PRESIDENT, IAIN BAXTER
N. E. THING CO.
ART DEPARTMENT

DATA PROCESSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

1970 International Data Processing Conference & Business Exposition
Seattle Center, Seattle, Washington 98109

EXHIBITOR'S CONTRACT FOR SPACE

Issuance Date:	June 8, 1970
Exhibitor:	N. E. Thing Co. Ltd.
Address:	1419 Riverside Drive
City & State:	North Vancouver, B. C. Canada

1. ALLOTMENT OF SPACE: We hereby contract for space in the **Exposition** Hall, Seattle Center, Seattle, Washington, designated on the Plan of Booths as Space No. (6) **x** **24721** **xx**, for the purpose of displaying and demonstrating data processing equipment, supplies or services manufactured or distributed by us during the 1970 International Conference of the Data Processing Management Association to be held June 23 through June 26, 1970. We agree to pay **\$300.00 (U.S. Funds)** for the use of this space on or before May 1, 1970.

Space allotted and not occupied for the purpose as herein above set forth before 10:00 a.m., on June 23, 1970, shall revert to the Data Processing Management Association, to be relet and occupied in any manner and for such purposes as the Data Processing Management Association may see fit; in such event all payments made hereunder shall be retained by the Data Processing Management Association as liquidated damages, and this contract shall be null and void.

As an exhibitor, we will not assign or sublet any right hereunder or space allotted to us, and we will not permit another firm or individual to share our space either with or without charge. The space assigned to us as an exhibitor is for our exclusive use.

2. EXHIBITS: We will arrange and install our exhibit in the space allotted and we agree that such installation will be started not earlier than 6:00 a.m. Thursday, June 18, 1970, and will be completed no later than 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 23, 1970. It is further understood that all exhibits will be removed by us from the Seattle Center not later than 12:00 Noon, Sunday, June 28, 1970, and that we will leave the space allotted free from all debris. It is our duty and responsibility at our sole cost and expense to install and put into place our exhibit before the opening of the exhibition and to dismantle and remove it immediately after the close of the exhibition. It is further understood that all exhibit material shall be fireproof, and that our occupancy of the space allotted and the exhibiting of material by us will be subject to the rules and regulations of the exhibition adopted by the Data Processing Management Association.

We accept the basic booth layout and exhibitor's sign as provided by the decorating company engaged by the Data Processing Management Association. We agree that any other displays or furnishings will be at our expense and that additional displays, other than equipment, will not project beyond the back half of the side wall.

The National Gallery of Canada
La Galerie nationale du Canada
Ottawa

order no. 453 ✓
commande no.
date July 16, 1969.

Ship the following to / Expédier ce qui suit à: To Department of Defence Production.

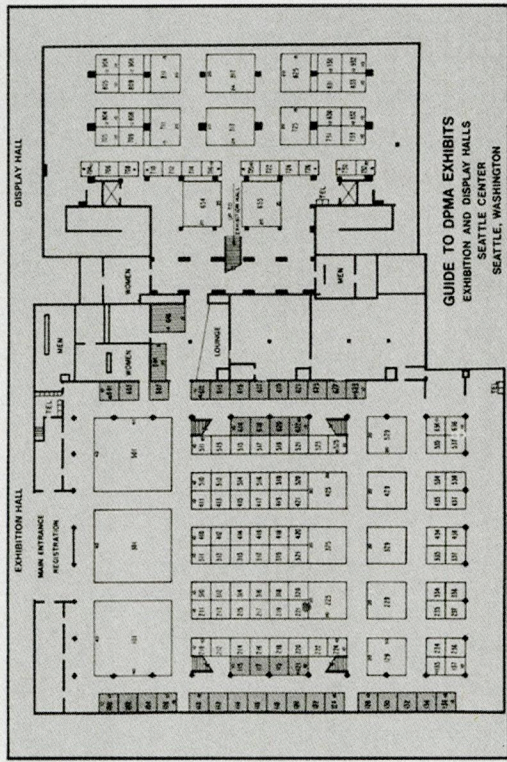
Outward	A la sortie
Office furniture used in the N.E. Thing Co. Environment exhibition.	Crown / Couronne
✓ 1 Desk Flat Top	Other / Autre
✓ 2 Chairs Rotary	x
✓ 2 10-Chaire Straight	x
✓ 4 Desk Typewriters	x
✓ 4 3' wastebasket	x
✓ 5 Costumers	x
✓ 2 Bookcases - (2 IN EXTENDED LOAN)	x
✓ 4 Filing Cabinets	x
✓ 1 Desk Flat Top Walnut	x
✓ 1 Bookcase Walnut	x

6 3/4 ROTARY CHAIRS - AUG. 1969
STRAIGHT

Date for shipment / Date de l'expédition: As soon as possible.
Insurance instructions / Instructions relatives à l'assurance:
Center / Vocteur: DEPT. OF DEFENSE PROD TRUCK
Value / Valeur:
Charges / Frais:
Weight / Poids:
Customs / Douanes:
To the Shipping Room / A la salle d'expédition:
Above shipment delivered today to
Expédition ci-dessus livrée aujourd'hui à
Action taken / Initiative:
Register / Archiviste:
Shipping Room / Salle d'expédition:
Register / Archiviste:

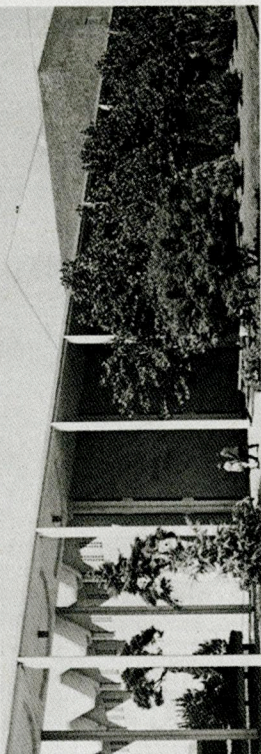
GUIDE TO
DPMA 1970 BUSINESS EXPOSITION
JUNE 23-26 SEATTLE CENTER
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

EXHIBIT HOURS
Tuesday, June 23—1:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, June 24—1:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Thursday, June 25—8:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Friday, June 26—8:30 a.m.-12 noon



EXHIBITOR	BOOTH LOCATION	EXHIBITOR	BOOTH LOCATION
Addressograph Multigraph Corporation, Cleveland, Ohio	110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122	Business Press International, Inc.	704, 706
Allen-Babcock Computing, Inc.	534	Business Supplies Corporation of America	218
Allen-Hollander Kimball Systems	805, 809	Celcus Memories, Inc.	235, 237, 334, 336 Island
American Key Punch Company	621	Cheshire, A Xerox Company	211, 213, 215, 310, 312, 314
American Telephone and Telegraph Company	419, 421, 425, 518, 520	Computer-Link Corporation	320
Ampex Corporation	435, 437	Computer Machinery Corporation	529 Island
Applied Digital Data Systems, Inc.	705, 709	Computer Solutions Inc.	732
Audio Devices, Inc.	808	Conference Book Service, Inc.	130, 132
Bankers Box/Record Storage Systems	722	Continental Computing Corporation, a subsidiary of Industrial Dynamics, Inc.	720
The Boeing Computer Services Division	415	Courier Terminal Systems, Inc.	644
Borsum & Pease Co.	216	Cummins Chicago Corp.	217, 219
Burroughs Corporation	329 Island	Data Instruments Company	119, 121
			129 Island

EXHIBITOR	BOOTH LOCATION	EXHIBITOR	BOOTH LOCATION
DATA MANAGEMENT	311, 313, 315, 410, 412, 414	Moore Business Forms	725, 731, 733, 830, 832 Island
Datamation®	536	Nashua Corporation—Computer Supplies Division	708
Data Processing Magazine	619	National Bank Book Co., Inc.	335, 337
Data Processing Management Association (DPMA)	311, 313, 315, 410, 412, 414	N.E. Thing Co. Ltd.	221
Data Product News	726	The Office	607
Data Products Corporation	102, 104	Pak-Well Corporation	601, 603
Dennison Manufacturing Company	712	PHI Computer Services, Inc.	710
A. B. Dick Company	411, 413	RCA Computer Systems	135, 137, 234, 236 Island
DYLAFO Business Machines Corporation	220, 222, 224	Royco Instruments	417
Dynamation Systems Corp. Limited	317	St. Regis Paper Company	436
Eastman Kodak Company—Business Systems Markets Division	817 Island	Sanford Data Systems, Inc.	825
Electronic Computer Programming Institute	434	Seafronics, Inc.	521
Engineered Data Products, Inc.	517	Staff Builders International	510
Friden Division, The Singer Company	611, 613, 615	Stant Industries	724
Frye Manufacturing Company	128	Supreme Equipment & Systems Corp.	811
General Electric Company—Information Systems Equipment Division	501 Island	Systems Manufacturing Corporation	115, 117
Robert P. Gillette & Co., Inc.	730	Tab Products Co.	225
Global Tabulating Equipment Corp.	716	Tally Corporation	210, 212, 214
Honeywell Data Products Division	229 Island	Teletype Corporation	523, 525
International Business Machines Corporation	101 Island	Terminal Equipment Corporation	512
International Management Systems, Inc.	617	TransCom, Inc.	636
Instrument Specialists, Inc.	614, 618	United States Tabulating Binder Corporation	316, 318
KYBE Corporation	514, 516	UNIVAC, Division of Sperry Rand Corp.	301 Island
Lewis Business Forms, Inc.	519	Universal Time Punch, Inc.	416
Magnetics Inc.	124	Vanguard Data Systems, Inc.	100
MAI Equipment Corporation	831, 833	Virginia Panel Corporation	106
Memorex Corporation	319, 321, 325, 418, 420	Wells TP Services, Inc.	804
3M Company	717 Island	Wilson Jones Company	511, 513
3M Company—Magnetic Products Division	714	Wright Line	429 Island
Modern Data	711	Xerox Corporation	211, 213, 215, 310, 312, 314
Monarch Metal Products, Inc.	620, 622	Xerox Corporation—Communication Products Division	



INFORMATION

about N.E.THING

NETWORK '70

SPECIAL PROJECT

You are being asked to participate in an art information NETWORK. This NETWORK involves transmitted Visual Sensitivity Information (V.S.I.) by TELEX and TELECOPIER across North America and around the world from the N.E. THING CO. to your special installations terminal during the month of October 1970.

INTRODUCTION

The N.E. THING CO. is a pioneer in V.S.I. transmissions using TELEX and TELECOPIERS. We have been involved with V.S.I. transmissions at the following exhibitions:

- Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, April 1969.
- N.E. THING CO. - HALIFAX TRANS - V.S.I. CONNECTION Sept. 15 - Oct. 7, 1969.
- Art by Telephone, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Ill., Nov. 1 - Dec. 15, 1969.
- The New Art of Vancouver, Newport Harbour Art Museum, Balboa, Calif., Oct. 1969.
- 955,000 Exhibition, Vancouver Art Gallery, organized by Lucy Lippard, Vancouver, Can., Jan. - Feb. 1970.
- Information, Museum of Modern Art, New York, organized by Kynaston McShine, July 1 - Sept. 30, 1970.

PURPOSE

The N.E. THING CO. is establishing a global NETWORK, tying together a number of museums, universities, art schools and interested persons. The transmitted art information works going over TELEX or TELECOPIER are directly applying communication to instant involvement on a vast geographic scale. Distances break down; inter-connected Art Works can be accomplished between the participating stations, and TRANSCOMMANDS can be carried out. This will involve your school or organization in one of the most important and exciting contemporary art projects developed with information. This exhibition offers a unique learning situation to groups of students from the following fields; Fine Arts, Communications, Creative Writing and Art Education.

Once the transmissions have been received, students may carry out the projects during the month of October as a part of their regular studies. In executing the various projects students may be required to transmit art information to participating stations or to the N.E. THING CO. central station. The realized data and photo-documentation along with the original transmitted V.S.I. can be immediately displayed on bulletin boards or clip boards, or any such area. This experience will give students a profound grasp of the new informational attitudes developing in contemporary art, and will become more apparent as NETWORK evolves. The resultant visualization and art information sent to you from the N.E. THING CO. will be interesting and thought provoking.

PROCEDURES

- For presenting NETWORK as an exhibition it is necessary to display the systems machinery, the art information transmissions and the resultant documentation.
- We would recommend that for maximum impact the entire gallery be devoted to this exhibition. However, this can be done in a small classroom, in a hallway, or in the corner of a gallery, even if another show is in progress.
- In terms of security we advise that transmission equipment be supervised during gallery hours to avoid misuse and unwarranted long distance phone and TELEX calls.

TELEX Installation

- TELEX Installation and rental fee .. approx. \$70.00 - 90.00 (billed directly by your local TELEX Co.).
 - Manual TELEX \$70.00
 - Automatic TELEX \$90.00
- The N.E. THING Co. will make all arrangements for delivery and installation of machines for participants.
- You will be informed 5 - 7 days in advance of the date of installation so that you can supervise the operation.

N.E. THING CO. LTD. (IAIN BAXTER, PRESIDENT), 1419 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NORTH VANCOUVER, B. C. CANADA.
TELEPHONE: (604) 929-3662, TELEX, 04-507802, CABLE: ANYTHING, VANCOUVER, B. C.

FOOTNOTE

- We should point out that the cost of TELEX and TELECOPIER installations and rentals may vary according to geographic location. Prices quoted are approximations as given to the N.E. THING CO. by TELEX and TELECOPIER companies and apply only to North America.
- Some small galleries and schools may have difficulty in allocating sufficient funds to this project. In such cases we suggest contacting someone in one of the following fields; Communications, Education, English, Environmental Studies and Industry, as they would undoubtedly be interested and offer their support.
- V.S.I. (N.E. THING CO. Terminology) - Visual Sensitivity Information, a term to categorize Art as pure information.

ENROLMENT FORM

To be returned to the N.E. THING CO. before September 6th, 1970.
Please involve us in the N.E. THING CO. special project GLOBAL TRANS-V.S.I. NETWORK 1970.

- It is our understanding;
- (a) that by returning this form we are committed to total involvement in this exhibition.
- (b) that we will send herewith a commitment deposit of \$150.00 (as described earlier), which will be refunded by the N.E. THING CO. if for any reason the equipment cannot be installed.
- (c) that we will be billed for TELEX transmissions (from the N.E. THING CO. to us) after the end of the exhibition. The total cost will not exceed \$100.00, as outlined above.

Please check appropriate boxes so we will know which system to install:

TELEX ☐ TELECOPIER ☐

Name _____

Position and/or Dept. _____

Address _____

Telephone No. _____

Authorized Signature _____

Note: Deadline for enrolment is SEPTEMBER 6th, 1970. Duplicate this form and return one copy along with your cheque, made payable to: Iain Baxter, President, N.E. THING CO., 1419 Riverside Drive, North Vancouver, B. C. Canada.

26.02

26.03



COPY/PRINT SERVICE

Suite 155, Tacoma Mall Office Building + Tacoma, Washington 98409
Phone GR 4-9525 No 3075

SOLD TO *PLU*
Mailer for N.E. Thing Show

DATE *9-23-70*
YOUR ORDER NO *9.769*
SHIPPED VIA _____

INFORMATION

N.E. THING CO. LTD.
1419 Riverside Drive North Vancouver B.C. Canada Tel. (604) 929-3862 Telex 04-507802 Cable Anything Vancouver B.C.

Project	Number
<i>9.70.9</i>	<i>9.1</i>

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

ACT DEPARTMENT
ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT
ART DEPARTMENT
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT
CONSULTING DEPARTMENT
COP DEPARTMENT
FILM DEPARTMENT
OBJECT DEPARTMENT
P. A. P. DEPARTMENT
PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT
PROJECT DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
SERVICE DEPARTMENT
THING DEPARTMENT
NETWORK 70

Description

At: Fine Art Department
PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY
Tacoma, Washington

On: OCT. 5 - 31, 1970

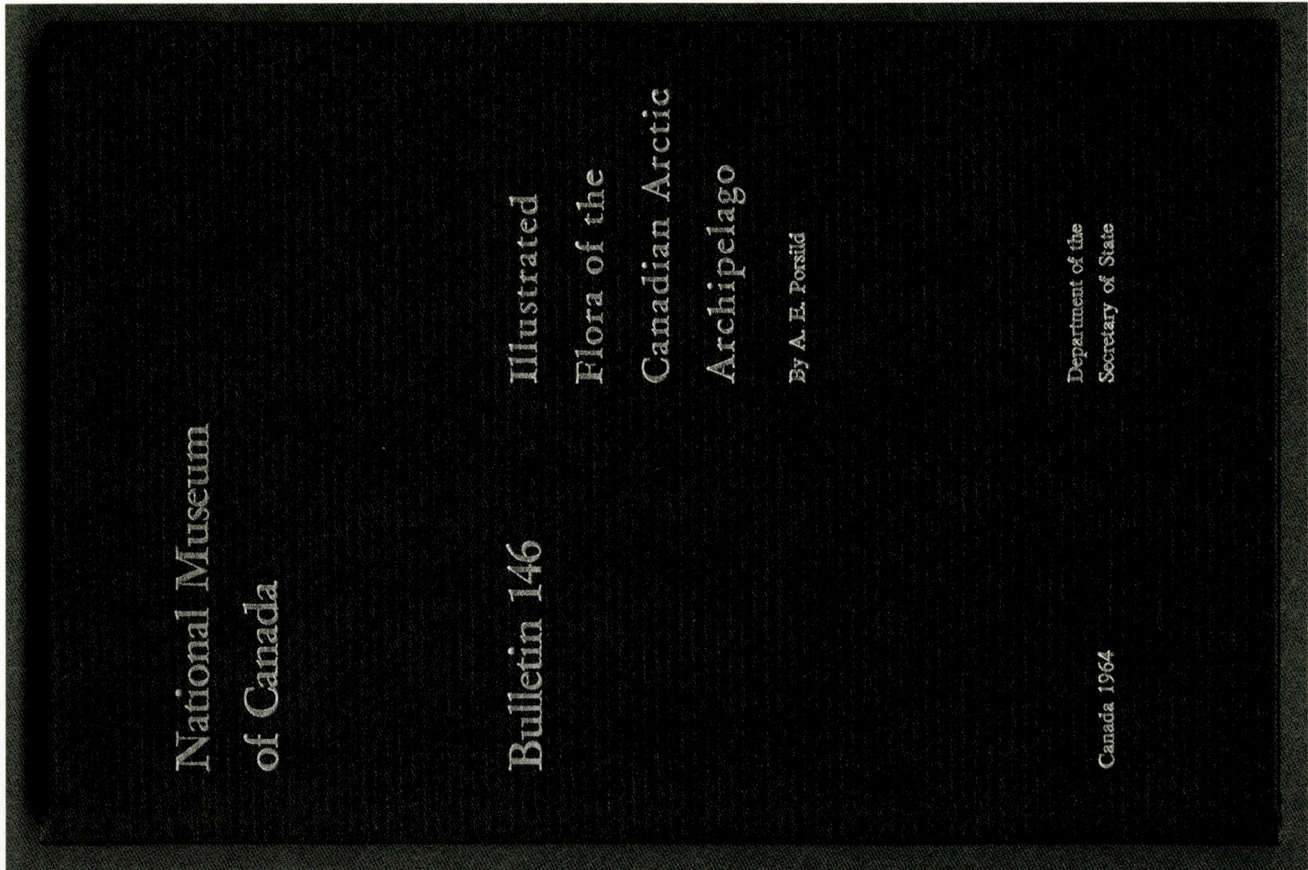
*Art Gallery
Montreal Library*

FOR REPRODUCTION, REDUCE ENTIRE PRESENTATION INCLUDING THIS STATEMENT.

LAYOUT SHEET INFORMATION DEPARTMENT N.E. THING CO. LTD.

Confirmed
John Baxter will be at P.L.U.
in the gallery October 31 3 p.m.
to discuss Conceptual Art
Public - invited.

- 01 "Illustrated Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago" / A.E. Porsild, Ottawa, Department of the Secretary of State, 1964, 218 pp. Records of the exhibition "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont., July 2-August 8, 1971 [organized by Pierre Théberge]. Exhibition records, file no. 1420, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 02 "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique" / Joyce Wieland, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1971, 223 pp. Catalogue published as part of the exhibition "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique." Records of the exhibition "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 03 Maquette of "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique" / Joyce Wieland, 1971. Pages 70-71 of "Illustrated Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago" by A.E. Porsild, Ottawa, Department of the Secretary of State, 1964, with interventions by Joyce Wieland. Records of the exhibition "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
- 04 Condition report of the maquette of "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique" / National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, n. pag. The pages were preserved by the National Gallery conservation staff in July 2007 for their exhibition in Documentary Protocols I.



ILLUSTRATED FLORA OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC ARCHIPELAGO

INTRODUCTION

The present work is intended as a guide or manual to the 340 species and major geographical races of flowering plants and ferns that comprise the vascular flora as it is known at present of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago¹. Besides conventional keys to families, genera, and species, it contains brief descriptions, line drawings, and maps showing the North American ranges of all species. For each species brief notes are given on local occurrence, soil preferences, economic uses, if any, and on their total or world distribution. A glossary explains the meaning of all special botanical symbols provided to simplify the reader's task.

dist. $\triangleleft \triangle$ $\triangleleft \triangle$ plant
sult $\triangleleft \triangle$ old con-
writ by the
work of that
a dis- ter with
buti- d distri-
a sta- abitats;
tions: a deduc-
final ra; and,
The ipelago.
each ere, for
refer ertinent
gene- cal and
speci- critical
given- generally
tions publica-

Similarly, the reader desiring more detailed information of the flora of the Eastern Canadian Arctic may refer to N. Polunin's "Botany of the Eastern Canadian Arctic", Part I of which (Nat. Mus. Canada, Bull. 92, 1940) deals with the vascular flora; Part II (Nat. Mus. Canada, Bull. 97, 1947) with mosses, lichens, and algae; and Part III (Nat. Mus. Canada, Bull. 104, 1948) with vegetation and ecology. Recent collections of plants from the eastern islands have added materially to the 246 species of vascular plants reported by Polunin from the eastern arctic islands. The more important of these recent collections are in the National Herbarium of Canada and, together with a few published additions to the flora, have been incorporated in the distribution maps at the end of the present work.

¹ Descriptions as well as range and habitat notes (in small print) have been inserted in the text for some 40-odd species that as yet have not been recorded in the flora of the Archipelago but that, for phytogeographic reasons, may be expected to turn up in parts so far incompletely explored.

03.03

PAGE 90

03.04

04

PAGE 91

JOYCE WIELAND

- 01 "INTERMEDIA A Survey of Intended Project Areas" / Intermedia Society, 1967, [6 pp.]. Box 1, folder 6, Intermedia Society fonds, gift of Edwin Varney 1980 and 1986, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Vancouver.
- 02 "Societies Acts, Constitution and By-laws" / Intermedia Society, July 6, 1967, [7 pp.]. Box 3, folder 2, Intermedia Society fonds.
- 03 "INTERMEDIA NEWS LETTER NO. 1" / Intermedia Society, c. 1967, [1 p.]. Box 3, folder 6, Intermedia Society fonds.
- 04 "Intermedia Nights" at Vancouver Art Gallery / photographer: Victor Doray, May 1968, 2 black and white photographic prints. 8.03, box 2, Victor Doray fonds, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 05 "Intermedia Newsletter" (vol. 1, no. 4, July 1968) / Vancouver: Intermedia Society, n. pag. Box C6, accession number 20.01, Morris Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 06 "Intermedia Newsletter" (vol. 1, no. 5, August 1968) / Vancouver: Intermedia Society, n. pag. Box C17, accession number 28. 07, Morris Trasov Archive.
- 07 Minutes of "Project Meeting" / Intermedia Society, March 3, 1969, [2 pp.]. Box 3, folder 10, Intermedia Society fonds, gift of Edwin Varney 1980 and 1986, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Vancouver.
- 08 "Video Projects" / Ed Varney, c. 1969-1970, [1 p.]. Box 3, folder 10, Intermedia Society fonds.
- 09 "Intermedia Questionnaire" / Intermedia Society, June 12, 1970, [2 pp.]. Box 3, folder 11, Intermedia Society fonds.
- 10 Letter to Intermedia / A Space, April 28, 1971, [1 p.]. Box 3, folder 3, Intermedia Society fonds.
- 11 "Black Daybook Running Oct 9, 1970-Oct 8, 1971" / Intermedia Society, 1970-1971, n. pag. Box 3, folder 3, Intermedia Society fonds.

- 12 "Application to: The Local Initiatives Program, Department of Manpower and Immigration, Intermedia Society: 2023 1st Avenue for Intermedia Project for the Greening of the Community" / Intermedia Society [Glenn Lewis, Gary Lee Nova, Ian Wallace, Michael Morris, Joe Kyle], 1971, 81 pp. [+ appendix]. Box C19, accession number 30.03, Morris Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 13 "Dear Diary...." / Gary H., January 19, 1972, [fragment] Box C6, accession number 20.01, Morris Trasov Archive.
- 14 "The Projects Trying to Be Underway...." / Intermedia Society, 1972, [fragment]. Box C6, accession number 20.01, Morris Trasov Archive.
- 15 "Discussions with Suzanne Le Moyne [sic] & Niam [sic] Kattan of the Canada Council re INTERMEDIA EXPOSURE BOOK" / Intermedia Society, 1972, [1 p.]. Box 13, folder 12, Intermedia Society fonds, gift of Edwin Varney 1980 and 1986, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Vancouver.
- 16 Testimonials gathered for the publication / anonymous [various authors], February 15th and 16th, 1972, [4 pp.]. Box 3, folder 12, Intermedia Society fonds.
- 17 "Notice: General Meeting of Intermedia Society" / Intermedia Society, June 8th, 1972, [1 p.]. Box 2, folder 20, Intermedia Society fonds.

3, 1967

INTERMEDIA
575 Beatty St.
Vancouver 3, B.C.
Telephone 688-4141

INTERMEDIA

A survey of Intended Project Areas.

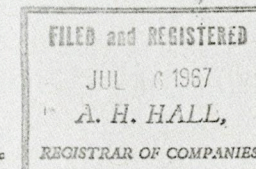
COMMUNICATION: To be of much value to the communicator, communication theory must be directly related to the possibilities of actual application. A number of theories put forth by McLuhan and others should be subjected to suitably controlled tests and experimentations.

INTERMEDIA WILL BE ENVIRONMENTALLY ORIENTED: There will be an emphasis on environmental creation, simulation and manipulation. Because of this there will be an exchange with those social scientists who are interested in behavioral problems. In addition to environmental orientation, it is a part of the outlook of the individuals connected with Intermedia to see things in terms of interrelationship. The traditional barrier between artists and scientists, besides having tragic consequences, doesn't make sense and it will be one of the purposes of Intermedia to facilitate fruitful exchange.

CONFERENCE-SEMINARS: May be held in a room especially equipped with electronic and optical devices. The purpose would be to extend the possibilities of communication .. to use non-verbal techniques to expand the range of communication...to be able to employ simultaneity when it is of advantage.

TECHNICAL STUDIES: It seems obvious that the increasing use of computers will have very extensive effects and, because of this, it is imperative that the possibilities and limitations of computerization be understood. In particular it is important that any aid computers can make to communication be fully explored. As part of this exploration, experiments should be conducted into computer generated art and music. Several specialists in cybernetics have expressed interest in Intermedia and wish to participate in research aimed at discovering new creative applications.

TELEPHONIC HOOK-UPS: There should be a permanent set-up at Intermedia so that phone calls from anywhere can be amplified and shared with an audience (and with extensions into the audience, members of the audience can also ask questions or make comments). Amplified telephone hook-ups can be both an economical and effective means of communication. This could also be an excellent means for groups and individuals who are conducting experiments of common interest to keep in touch with each other. In combination with this, it is possible with equipment which can translate a line in process of being drawn into a telephone signal which is reconstructed in the form of a projection at the other end of the hook-up, to use the telephone for both visual and verbal exchange.



"SOCIETIES ACT"
I hereby certify that a duplicate original of this document has been filed with me pursuant to the Societies Act.
Dated this 6th day of July 1967
Registrar of Companies

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

INTERMEDIA SOCIETY

CONSTITUTION

- (1) The name of the Society is "Intermedia Society"
- (2) The objects of the Society are to encourage and to increase the facilities in Greater Vancouver and elsewhere in the Province of British Columbia for experimenting with intersensory experiences and with relating such experiences to the fields of total-involvement-theatre, television, electronic programming and audio and visual images, projected printmaking and auditory visual, tactile and spatial involvement.
- (3) The operations of the Society are to be chiefly carried on in Greater Vancouver and elsewhere in the Province of British Columbia.
- (4) In the event that the Society shall be liquidated or wound up all of its property and assets then remaining or future interests which, but for such liquidation would vest in the Society, shall be transferred and conveyed to another recognized non-profit organization having objects altogether or in part similar to the objects of this Society. Such other organizations shall be selected by the members of this Society upon liquidation subject to the condition that all funds and property of the organization selected shall be administered only for the benefit of non-profit or charitable objects.

Project Meeting
March 3rd

thirty present

VAC

Glen Lewis asks for cost estimates for projects and performances.
- only 2 1/2 months to go to show time.
- slug posters to be sketched out by Gary Lee Nova
- Loop to be shot every day at Gallery - to be shown on T.V.
- radio commercials by Alan Sharp. OK go ahead
- interviews to be considered
- domes and closets with exhibitions in the main Gallery
- Audrey Doray, one room phosphorescence
- Domes to be moved outside into city space
- next meeting Thursday at 5 pm

Stratford

Tom Osborne- string cables and string origami sculptures from it
when tough cables sculptures. water is agitated.

Audrey Doray- phosphorescents

David - use light panels by Audrey, make light flashes
and bounce light off panel

Gerry Gilbert- CIL to provide polyethylene to create a tropical
forest environment inside pool.

Tom Burrows- a surreal trip on park, ocean sounds playing
over the surface

Erice- #1 steel ball on chain

Roy- rope- tight rope walking on schedule

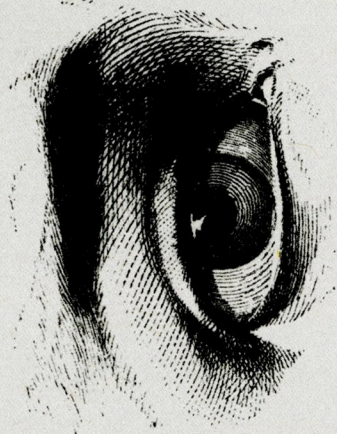
Michael- activity in the pool, documented with t.v. or film
the land, plastic pipe with red water

Vance- underwater sounds, plastic dome with lawn sprinkler with
rainbows, land hidden speakers embedded in the ground
Jim Carter- air, build drilling rig in the centre
Tim- solar heat systems

Dallas- fence in whole pool, nobody can see pool, use video tapes
to play back tapes of sea monsters and performances etc. travelling
object with poems.

Ian- vehicle on pool, radio controlled

John- soft sounds, wind chimes, harmonics, just below audible level



VIDEO PROJECTS

1. Documentation of a day or period of time in the
office of Intermedia recording just what goes on,
perhaps facing the door of the office or perhaps
which take place there or recording the transactions
stairs focusing down into the office and on the top of the
comes upstairs that day or period of time.
2. From a fixed position a record of the clouds as
they pass across the face of Mt. Seymour during
a very specific period of time, say 5 minutes.
3. A video tape of the route between the Intermedia
office and the Vancouver Art Gallery in real time.
4. Special project at Lighthouse park dealing with the
relationship between the waves and the land.
5. Various other short bits including personal stuff,
which in the long run is the most real, and tech-
nological experiments utilizing potential intrinsic
to video rather than preprogramming possibilities
derived from or existing as extensions of other
media.

edwin varney

INTERMEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE JUNE 12, 1970

It has become apparent that varied ideas concerning Intermedia's
organizational structure exist among the people who have used Intermedia
facilities as to the future direction of Intermedia.

We would like to urge each of you to fill in the questionnaire
below, which was drawn up to provide the board of directors with an
indication of thoughts on structure and organization of Intermedia.

The board of directors as the legally responsible body for
financial transactions and relations vis-a-vis the general public must
be aware of the attitudes and views of the general membership to
determine as to whether they wish to serve on the board.

We would like to suggest that your willingness to participate in
the completion of the questionnaire will have a determining influence
on the future direction of Intermedia. If many individuals share your
views, we suggest that you obtain their support signatures.

As it is physically impossible to accommodate every individual shade
of opinion, at the next board of directors meeting we suggest that
groups of viewpoints select a delegate to represent their opinions.

Let us hope that we can come to decisions which will make
Intermedia a comfortable working space which will be suited to the
needs of its members.

1. Should we have a director? yes/no *yes*
2. If yes- what should his function be?
to coordinate activities, seek grant monies,
3. If we don't what would be the functions of an elected project
committee in conjunction with a business manager?
4. It has been suggested that we need a business manager to keep books,
do cheques, etc. yes/no *yes*
5. Should we have a secretary? yes/no *yes*
6. How about an office with just a phone answering service? *no*
7. Should we have separate studio areas?
Film cutting rooms yes/no *yes*
Sound room yes/no *yes*
darkroom yes/no *yes*
Animation rooms yes/no *yes*
Video room yes/no *yes*
Print room yes/no *yes*
8. Should they be open to everyone yes/no *yes (some training needed as prerequisite)*
9. if not- what system of selection should be used?
10. Should individual projects be supported? yes/no *yes*
11. If yes- under what criteria?
provide facilities & consultation
12. If no- what kind of group projects?
13. Should all projects be subject to committee decision? yes/no *yes*
14. Should Intermedia provide facilities and equipment only? yes/only

a space

APRIL 28, 1971
INTERMEDIA
2023 EAST 1ST STREET
VANCOUVER

THIS IS OUR FIRST ATTEMPT TO MAKE CONTACT WITH INTERMEDIA. WE HAVE HAD A NUMBER OF CONTACTS WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN YOUR ACTIVITIES BUT WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST TO APPROACH YOU ANONYMOUSLY AS OUR ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATION IS NEWLY FORMED.

IN THE FIRST PLACE WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF INTERMEDIA. THERE IS NO PLACE IN TORONTO WHERE SUCH INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND. WE HAVE A RESOURCE LIBRARY WHICH THUS FAR IS EMPTY OF VANCOUVER INFORMATION. IN THIS REGARD WE WOULD LIKE A SELECTION OF YOUR RECENT PUBLICATIONS, BROCHURES OR ANNOUNCEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANYTHING ELSE WHICH YOU FEEL WOULD HELP US TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITIES.

WE ARE INTERESTED IN A VIDEO TAPE EXCHANGE AND IN SOME TRAFFIC OF PEOPLE FROM VANCOUVER TO TORONTO IN REGARDS TO EXHIBITION AT A SPACE, HOWEVER WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THIS FIRST CONTACT AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BEFORE MAKING FURTHER ARRANGEMENTS. WE ARE ALSO IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING OUR NEW SPACE (OUR OTHER PLACE WAS DESTROYED IN A FIRE) AND WE WILL BE BUSY WITH THAT FOR A FEW WEEKS

LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU SOON.

THE DIRECTORS, A SPACE

85 st. nicholas st., toronto, ontario 920-3628

INTRODUCTION

This is a proposal to the Local Initiatives Program, titled "INTERMEDIA PROJECT FOR GREENING OF THE COMMUNITY." The project outlined will create new jobs intended to service and better the community on important artistic, cultural and social levels.

The proposal is meant to discover and articulate to the broadest spectrum of community cultural needs and endeavours INTERMEDIA'S total resources. This is a unique proposal.

Any large proposal necessarily has its discrete parts or sub projects. To cut out any of these sub projects would be a detriment to the comprehensiveness of the whole proposal.

We plan to set up a strong and workable co-ordinating committee which represents the whole proposal and we are giving priority to the 'information systems' projects, particularly the 'information research and exchange project' because it will give us an information overview of our activities and others and give us the information we need to evaluate community directions and formats for the future. If we didn't do this the sub projects would remain as discrete information only.

[...]

It is inevitable that the Department of Manpower will find duplications with other applications in relation to some of the sub projects in our brief because our proposal is intentionally inclusive of a wide range of cultural activity. Our sub projects should not be treated as isolated from one another but in the event that they are and some are cut out, we would suggest that other co-ordinators from other artistic applications to Manpower be invited to our Management Committee so that we can still obtain the information and consultation we need from those activities to keep our cultural research balanced.

[p. 2]

We have given a lot of thought to the setting up of the Management Committee not only as a co-ordinating and reporting body to properly supervise and administer our program but to initiate a 'format' which could be used as a model for a more meaningful relationship between artists separate cultural activities and communities and to create new models for cultural animation in the community.

A body such as we are proposing would have a definite value to society and government in terms of consultation about cultural awareness and perceptions on many levels, its access to artistic information and research, its knowledge of and expertise in media, its familiarity with developing community needs in creative leisure and its potential for advising and consulting on cultural animation - in jobs, land use and development, business, housing, the aged, the young, recreation, education, media use, etc. In short, on the growing national sensitivity in a changing and more complicated world. This is the potential of our submission which could be enlarged to good effect but which if cut down would damage the intention, worthiness and effectiveness of our proposal.

It should be emphasized that this program has been carefully studied and agreed to by the people who constitute the human resources of INTERMEDIA and that a high level of enthusiasm and anticipation now exists for the expressed project.

[...]
[p. 7]

PLAN FOR WINTER 1971 - SPRING 1972 PROJECTS

The "INTERMEDIA Project for the Greening of the Community" can best be articulated as an expanded role and responsibility within the community beyond INTERMEDIA's essential artistic base.

The new form of INTERMEDIA that has evolved and will be further projected is a positive animation of sub project groups and objectives. These groups are interactive not only within the broad limits of the community at various levels, but also interactive within themselves so that a central information exchange service is conducted at frequent intervals. This exchange is accomplished through the key people within each sub group. This area of intergroup information exchange will be strengthened in order to intensify community service through the following project heading:

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE
INFORMATION SYSTEMS PROJECTS
ENVIRONMENTAL AND RECYCLING DESIGN PROJECTS
COMMUNITY CULTURAL AND FREE WORKSHOP PROJECTS

[...]
[p. 8]

Cater am skeptical about

Nov. 13 Bonnie rich with flu... Barry in a 2
Ellie's still in 7 mins... what the hell to do?
LATER ON: The one is here... (you would dig a bear)
Slowly want to leave cause it's nice + quiet hear

TODAY IS FRIDAY THE 13th

LAST NITE ED READ POETRY SHOWED SLIDES, FILM LOOPS, AND PLAYED MUSIC TO A SITTING ROOM PLENTY CROWD AT THE ART GALLERY. TODAY ROY READ FROM HIS POETRY AT NOON. NELSON & PAT CAME IN. LAST DAY FOR CANADA COUNCIL APPLICATIONS. THINGS SURE ARE SLOW THIS TIME OF YEAR. TOM SHANDELL SAID INTERMEDIA'S LIKE A HUGE VACUUM CLEANER. ED SAID KEEP IT PURE. BARRY SAID HEY I JUST FOUND OUT INTERMEDIA DOESN'T EXIST. PEARL WILLIAMS LAID TWO TICKETS TO HORRORAMA ONUS. FRIDAY THE 13th.

IF INTERMEDIA IS TO BE AN EQUIPMENT LENDING LIBRARY WHY DOESN'T IT SIMPLY RENT AN OFFICE AND GOE INTO BUSINESS. IF ITS TO BE A TELEVISION STUDIO WHY ISN'T THE VIDEO EQUIPMENT HERE ??? HAS INTERMEDIA GONE BACK EAST FOR THE FALL ??? WHERE DOES THE CANADA COUNCIL GET ITS MONEY ??? WHO IS ASKING THESE QUESTIONS ???

1. ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

INTERMEDIA's auditing firm of Chambers and Phillips, Chartered Accountants, will be utilized to set up and administer proper records for the proposed projects. In addition to the above record keeping arrangement, the central office facilities of INTERMEDIA will be used along with the full-time services of INTERMEDIA's Secretary/receptionist. An Executive Projects Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator will be hired as part of the Local Initiatives Program to accommodate this expansion and to evaluate and compile program reports and feasibility studies for future projects intended to enlarge employment potential. The Management Committee will be composed of the Co-ordinator in each separate project area, the Executive Project Co-ordinator, the Secretary and the Chairman of the Board of Directors. This arrangement will facilitate the sub project groups information exchange reports and provide a solid administrative base for the program.

Duties of the Management Committee will include supervising the projects' schedule; compilation of periodic reports of each projects' activities; prepare artistic feasibility-studies-criteria for the future; act as an artistic consultation body for other organizations, commissions, communities and level of government.

[...]
[p. 10]

INTERMEDIA AND THE INTERMEDIA LOCAL INCENTIVES "GREENING OF THE COMMUNITY" PROJECT: A Statement by the Executive Projects Co-ordinator, Ian Wallace

This "GREENING OF THE COMMUNITY" project represents a new and Unified stage in the INTERMEDIA's commitment to community participation. The INTERMEDIA artist is aware, like the modern scientist, that the world's greatest resource is the creative imagination of humanity itself, and that this will be a key to survival in the future. The uniqueness of the INTERMEDIA concept in Vancouver is that the traditional visions of art and nature are united with experiments in advanced forms of communication technology; bridging the gap between regional and global awareness, and humanizing natural mythology with the dynamics of the space age.

INTERMEDIA has established itself as a major force in Canadian art in its capacity for vital and unprecedented accomplishment in creating unique collaborations of the

visual and performing arts, combining video technology with modern dance, and the voice of the poet with the Moog synthesizer of the musician.

Involvement in the "GREENING OF THE COMMUNITY" project will not only allow INTERMEDIA to expand its horizons and involve a more advanced mobilization of human resources; it will also provide a working contract for community participation of the artist which far surpasses the existing gallery system.

[...]
[p. 14]

2. INFORMATION SYSTEMS PROJECTS

These projects are mainly concerned with providing information and dissemination and retrieval within INTERMEDIA and the community. An extension service will communicate information generated by the projects to the community through print, video, cablevision, radio, film, exhibition and workshops.

[p. 15]

Project A - INFORMATION RESEARCH PROJECT COMMUNITY PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. THE NEED TO BE MET: Communication within the whole

OBSERVATIONS

Communications Research was set up over the summer through an OFY grant to the Company of Young Canadians as an effort to provide a desperately needed overview of all community oriented communications projects occurring in Vancouver. Communications Research was set up with a backlog of 5 months of data accumulated. Detailed research made through direct contact and participation with approximately 20 specific groups identified large communication gaps between the following areas or sub-sets of community activity:

young socially oriented projects (such as the Window Project - formerly with NOW, Cool-Aid Youth Communication Project, The Vancouver Free University, Inter-High, and the Joshua Society)

new community media projects (Metro Media Association, Neighbourhood radio Society, Community Print Project)

establishing community projects (Inner City, Community Planning Association, Local Area Councils, Information Centres)

artistic projects set up to involve the community (Intermedia, Stadium Gallery)

These inter-area gaps were found to be larger and of more serious consequence than is evident at a glance. Duplication, misunderstanding and lack of cooperation and inter-involvement are the results of these communication gaps. Not that there is no communication occurring within sub-sets made up of single projects dependant upon each other for goal validation or workability; lacking is a total sort of understanding between sub-sets, a larger sort of workability, an Overview. Sub-sets must involve themselves in their own workability to a degree where communication with other sub-sets is handled sloppily: Group communication to their particular area of activity and are left without time or means to remain in touch with other areas of activity.

[p. 16]

Each area and each group are attempting to introduce new definitions of community geared to rapidly changing environment, new ideas of workability into society through building on established ground and through communicating with citizens. All should and must be in communication with each other and the whole all comprise so that each may build on the new ground each other establish. If this communication amongst the whole is not sufficient, like a faulty organism the whole collapses.

OBJECTIVE

To encourage and partially facilitate communication amongst (within) the whole by providing a diagrammed overview of the whole to which the individual groups could refer in order to see what other groups within the whole are up to, to clarify where individual groups relate and where new relation is potential, and thus, to view the whole as a meaningful project in itself.

Since relations within the whole change, the whole changes with time. Therefore, not only one diagrammed overview of the whole would suffice: one diagrammed overview would be representative of the state of the whole for the time which that overview was formulated. A series of diagrammed overviews must be presented. Each diagrammed overview must be based upon continuously updated data. Data for each diagrammed overview presented would be gathered through a survey of all visible projects (50 specific projects are within current range of view).

[...]
[p. 29]

Project B - CO-ORDINATION, CONFERENCE, INFORMATION MONITORING PROJECT

[...]
[p. 31]

PROJECTS

1. ESTABLISH ARCHIVES - FILING SYSTEM

To collect and correlate all information and relevant documentation existing in slide, film, video, print on projects completed and in progress ranging from the organizing of exhibitions like the postcard show (see attached review), the proposed Intermedia retrospective, environmental and media workshop, and individual projects ranging from the fabrication of sculpture to information on Cable TV. Available for artists to assist them in researching the feasibility and realization of their own concepts and to the public in the form of programs, exhibitions and workshops.

2. SILKSCREEN WORKSHOP

14 artists have submitted print proposals to Image Bank and the service of an experienced printer and print shop are available. The completion of this project will realize 26 editions of original prints.

3. MEDIA KITS FOR WORKSHOPS

Fabrication of 100 media kits which can be used in workshop situations to study the effect of colour on the perception and articulation of the urban and rural environment. Each kit will contain 10 visual aids and information on their use.

4. FILM/VIDEO EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Edit an accumulated 5000 feet of 16 mm film into programs suitable for public screenings and workshop situations. Edit an additional 3000 feet of 16 mm colour research documentation shot by us over the last two years for transfer onto colour video for community cable release and video exchange with other artists across the country. Compile Image Bank film archives.

5. MONTHLY MAILING/ARTIST DIRECTORY

Continue regular mailings to artists in a monthly bulletin format. This will complement the information exchange service designed to facilitate communications at an artist/public level. These mailings will be used to compile an artists directory.

6. ACCESS TO PUBLIC MEDIA

Editing and layout of material to be regularly presented ready for publication to public broadcast and print media from Image Bank's and related projects information pools.

PERSONEL AND DUTIES

- a) Artistic co-ordinator and consellor for Image Bank Project -Michael Morris
To serve on the management committee and compile periodic reports; research formats and outlets for all Image Bank projects; organize compilation of files, archives and artists' directory; prepare media kits, mailings, workshops, exhibitions, and extension programs.
- b) Artist in audio-visual resources -Gary Lee Nova
Edit an accumulated 5000 feet of 16 mm film for screenings etc.; edit 3000 feet of 16 mm colour research documntation for media kits and transfer to colour video; act as audio visual resource consultant; coordinate and schedule screenings and workshops.
- c) Silscreen printer -Rendy Glenhill
Run print workshop and assist each artist print his design; be available to give workshops to small groups of artists in the studio as well as facilitate printing of posters etc.
- d) Layout artist, photographer, projectionist -Warren Knetchel
Provide photographic documentation of projects for archives; assist in preparation of photographic work for screen workshop; act as projectionist for screenings; work on layouts for all printing formats.
- e) Carpenter/maintenance/designer -Gordon Allan
To fabricate 100 media kits; assist silk-screen workshop by building necessary screens, drying racks, paper and print draws, shelves for inks and equipment; construct a light table for layout work on newspapers, mailings and magazines; build shelves to hold film cans; help construct temporary props and displays to be used in environmental research and workshops.
- f) Secretary/Librarian for Image Bank -Kate Metcalfe
To assist with correspondence arising from the prodigious amount of mail already being sent to Image Bank by artists from the city and across the country wishing to exchange information; filling of

all information now existing as slides, photos, articles, drawings, correspondence, proposals, etc. for easy reference, prepare notes from meetings, typing and project co-ordination, answer phone etc; work on monthly mailing.

- g) Secretary for audio/visual consultant, film program -Susan Lee Nova
Catalogue all film slide and video information for archives; schedule screenings and workshops; assist with mailing and secretarial work.
- h) Editor for Public Media -Gerry Gilbert
---Establishing communication between the editors of the public print and broadcast media (local and national) and the project co-ordinators;
---preparing material from Image Bank and the Documentation/Information Pool, in cooperation with Image Bank, the Project co-ordinators and the artists; for regular presentation, in the required formats, to the public media. For example, tapes to radio, lay- outs to newspapers and magazines, graphic sequences to television, and arranging interviews. Emphasis will be on developing forms similar to those used by advertisers. - but without trying to sell anything - which the media editors can easily fit into their formats; -- liaison between Image Bank and the British Columbia Monthly, a review of books and the arts, circulation 5000, which will begin publication next march. Image Bank is developing the format for the magazine, supervising the printing, and functioning as the visual arts editor. Gerry Gilbert will expedite all aspects of this relationship.

[...]

[p. 34]

Use will also be made of the following: documentary photographer, documentary cinematographer, documentary video cameraman, and dark room assistants and printer (Refer to jobs a, b, c, d, f and h under Documentary and Information Personnel Pool).

The Image Bank personnel will also be used for the Environmental Awareness Workshops (Refer to Environmental and Recycling Design Research Projects), and all personnel will be expected to assist wherever possible with the proposals in the INTERMEDIA sub projects.

[...]

The projects trying to be underway seem to be intact and together resemble a skeleton with many bones missing - but like this is only LIP emergency depression measures - there's other money coming into Intermedia activity (all over the place - not only Intermedia as we narrowly view it) there's other Energy - more where this whole trip came from - things go on and off and on and anti-entropically piece together.

SSo heres what appears to will happen from the monetary energy received from LIP:

(referring to typed proposal)

(2 project A Information Research Exchange Project)
COMMUNITY PROJECT OVERVIEW
HIRING ONE PEOPLE Gary Hoving 736-5769
Documentation and Information Pool Personnel
hiring two people Sheryl Druick (have camera, will travel) 433-1043
Him Carter drkm, printer

(2 project C) IMAGE BANK
first cheques will be made out to:
Gary Lee Nova art coord
Randy Glenhill silkscreen
Kate Metcalfe secretary archivist
Gerry Gilbert editor writer
(from, there, money can be distributed as its needed)

(2 project D) PACIFIC RIM COMMUNICATIONS 253-0897
hiring 3 people Ed Varney art coord
John MacDonald info officer
Henry [unclear] [unclear]

(3 project D) Acoustic Ecology project/ FREE SOUND EXCHANGE
hiring one people Howard Broomfield 255-0154

(4 project A) Community Theatre
hiring one people John Worland of Manfro
Group 987-9067

Don Druick's music thing is still actively involving diverse types of musicians but hasn't been LIPed and so is the dancing still happening and is Evelyn Roth still recycling? and environmental awareness is all of us as is the monitoring process and it looks as though artists will have a say in their urban environment ...and theme the bones

NOTE: the cheques are processed in 10 days. It is possible to transfer money to others months and then transfer cheques to another name. the raw energy process makes it possible to share

Wed January 19 72 I was going down town to meet Howard when I overshot my bus stop when I walked down the wrong street in the wrong direction when I walked down the wrong street I turned around and bumped into Ian Wallace who had to catch a jet to a San Francisco film said hey I have to run, do check out manpower which has accepted the proposal up to 25000 or something to that effect So I proceeded there in elevator to 4th floor where I spoke casually to Brian Excel who said casually but regretted that Intermedia must quickly reapply asking for absolute maximum of 25000 in which case 12 people could be hired only and you should get it in for tomorrow and it will be accepted allowing of course for 'process' error such as incompetence or weather or not level #10 is in a bad mood and volms over the paper Oh yes, and indicate which projects will be axed GAK: Its like being in a battlefield of ideas and all around you friendly ideas are being popped off ever so casually but regretdly and thats how the money works says Brian Excel and ideas come crashing to the ground Its like how many ducks will make it through the shooting range on their way south

Cut quickly to the New Era wed 19 lotsa people around a table something about a black box... news comes crashing down like a blithering duck Crash Caucus? what do we do this time says Mr. Strong in how many places in the country is this section happening now to think the first time I heard of this section someone was asked to think the first time I heard of this section people fuck the project train and (a)s and (b)s 10 to 13 people definitely need the cash 3-5 indefinite phone this person phone that trip

and then to -the files and the numbers and the accounting and the tax trips and the typing it all out pretty

and here it is folks. LIP... Clean... Green... and we all only hope it will all look out and that we can forget or rather work to erase such fuckups out of existence.

(This page may appear in the Canada Manpower filing system)

your truly
Gary H

Discussion with Suzanne Lemoine & Miam Kattan of the Canada Council re
INTERMEDIA EXPOSURE BOOK

This book is a process, is a process.

PAST
Intermedia history in terms
of influence upon 1. Vancouver a. community
b. Art's scene
c. artists

2. Canada a CC
b arts scene
c

A CHRONOLOGY

A CHRONOLOGY
as revealed in newspaper clippings, communications
& applications with the Canada Council, reports,
correspondance etc etc drawn from files,
library, Image Bank etc as well as
reprints as catalogs

library, and reprints
taken from books, magazines, images, catalogs
publications, assorted & occasional prints,
images, poems, writings, diagrams etc

PRESENT

PRESENT
 compilation of who, what, where, and
 etc of the Vancouver and Intermedia
 crowd, a catalog of history and present
 possibilities and who's into what exchange

Future

Future
- assessment of road trip possibility, package ideas, exchanges, information, projects & projections etc etc. including
1. record
independent cases

1. record
2. video tapes
3. sculptural objects
4. wall pieces
5. mailing
6. performances
7. etc.

OPEN ACCESSIBILITY TO EXPRESSION IN PRINT MEDIA TO ARTIST

a lot of this to be in the old standard $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ page format printed up 1200 of each of about 200 pages - 1000 for the book, 200 for whatever distribution etc etc. seems appropriate for that piece of data.

Everything to be labeled

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

YOU ARE WRITING/DRAWING
THIS BOOK

February 15 1972

That was a long time ago. The first sound gallery was on 4th Avenue. It really was the place for winners. Or Itall started with Sam, yes I believe it did. Or maybe it started with Al, or maybe a neg. Or any or all, of us really. That is any of us who listened or talk or in any way conceived of such a thing.

or talk or in any way concerning words, words, words, are so ephemeral, yet they are the traditional way of passing myths on.

When I think of the sound gallery I think of colors: fluorescent, bright, warm, glowing colors. That's the feeling which motivated the exhibit. That's what I thought our vision was. What really happened was much harder, darker and maybe, deeper when I think on it now.

Februar y 16 1972

February 14/72
Right now they are playing Paul Butterfield on the radio. Out of me wants to stand up and dance & part of me wants to transmit it to you. That piece, this piece, EAST/WEST, is what was most listened to that year. It seemed to contain the richness of the many parts of our shattered lives. And that repeated rhythm building properly represented the worked for ecstasy

Whether it ever happened...
that is another thing which keeps on curving
constantly.

constantly.
Until we, all meet together etc...
And that was what we all believed.
The Union was supposed to be the revolution.
Fortunately we almost all lived through it.

The published history of Antennae goes back to 1963 with the issue of Spring. The letter that culminated in Antennae Magazine later that year a Romeo Electric Stencil Machine and Duplicator was purchased ~~for~~ ^{as a token} of new publication followed, led by ^{my own} poems by many poets and graphics, ~~appearing~~ ^{published} in ~~Antennae~~ ^{Antennae} ~~was~~ ^{issued} under the name Antennae Press in 1964. ~~Antennae~~ ^{Antennae} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~first~~ ^{first} ~~issue~~ ^{issue} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~magazine~~ ^{magazine} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~magazine~~ ^{magazine} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~first~~ ^{first} ~~issue~~ ^{issue} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~magazine~~ ^{magazine} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~magazine~~ ^{magazine} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~first~~ ^{first} ~~issue~~ ^{issue} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~magazine~~ ^{magazine} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~magazine~~ ^{magazine} ~~was~~ ^{was} 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NOTICE

GENERAL MEETING OF INTERMEDIA SOCIETY

JUNE 8th, 1972 - THURSDAY

8:00 P.M.

at the NEW ERA SOCIAL CLUB, 358 POWELL STREET, VANCOUVER

to discuss whether or not to make another application to the Canada Council, and whether, in fact, INTERMEDIA should continue as a functioning Society.

AGENDA

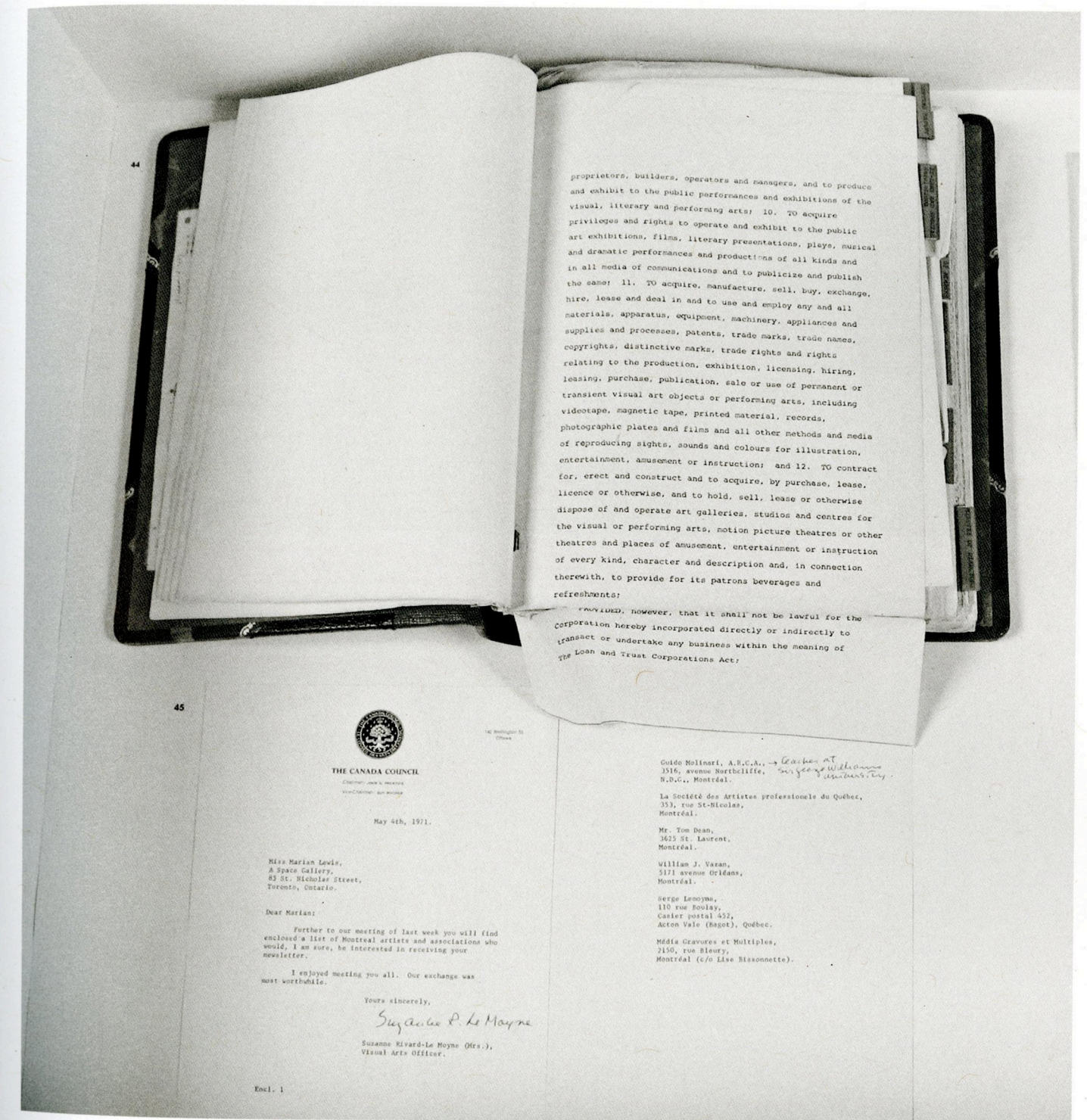
1. Future of INTERMEDIA?
2. Application to the Canada Council?
3. Report of Work in Progress
4. Equipment Inventory: You are requested to bring with you a list of the equipment you have that is INTERMEDIA's, and please state what condition it is in.
5. New Business: If there are items you want discussed - call 681-9992 and we'll add them to the Agenda.
OR - bring them to the meeting.

PLEASE COME.

June 1/72
LG

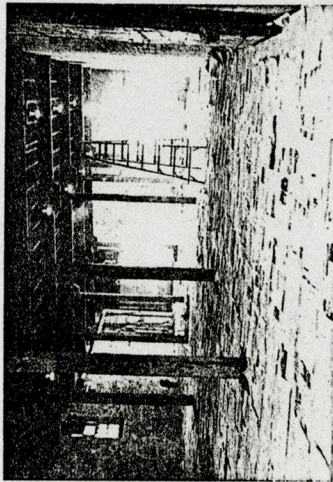
- 01 Binder containing "Letters Patent" [1971] and minutes of meetings [1971-1981] / The Nightingale Arts Council and A Space, 1971-1981, approx. 200 pp., plus Letter to A Space / Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne [program officer at the Canada Council], May 4th, 1971, [2 pp.]. Box 80, A Space fonds, gift of A Space 1996, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. A Space fonds, A Space Gallery, Toronto. Items photographed as they were displayed during Documentary Protocols II.
- 02 "Information Package" (no. 1, May 1971) / Toronto: A Space, [7 pp.]. Box 2, folder 2, Intermedia Society fonds, gift of Edwin Varney 1980 and 1986, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Vancouver.
- 03 "The Toronto Space Proposals by "The Association for Performance" / John Perreault, June 1971, 1 p. Artists files: "John Perrault," A Space fonds, gift of A Space 1996, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
- 04 "News" (no. 3, July 1971) / Toronto: A Space, [7 pp.]. Box C58, accession number 89.25, Morris/Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 05 "News" (no. 4, August 1971) / Toronto: A Space, [12 pp.]. Box B15, accession number 96.14, Morris/Trasov Archive.
- 06 "News" (no. 5, 6, September 1971) / Toronto: A Space, [10 pp.]. Box /B15, accession number 96.14, Morris/Trasov Archive.
- 07 Application to the Local Initiatives Program / Nightingale Arts Council, November 1971, [7 pp.]. Box 87, A Space fonds, gift of A Space 1996, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
- 08 Application to the Canada Council for the Arts / Nightingale Arts Council, February 3, 1972, [17 pp.]. Box 80, A Space fonds.
- 09 Ads for "A Space" and "The Café" published in FILE (vol. 1, no. 1, 1972), p. 4.
- 10 "Local Initiatives Program: Application for Extension of Project" / Nightingale Arts Council, September 21, 1972, [4 pp.]. Box 87, A Space fonds, gift of A Space 1996, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

- 11 "Vehicule: Handbook of Toronto Cultural Resources = Manuel des ressources culturelles de Toronto = Manuale delle risorse culturali di Toronto" / edited by Isobel Harry and Marlene Sober; Toronto: A Space, 1972, 142 p. Box 108, A Space fonds.
- 12 Accompanying text for an installation entitled "Intervention," exhibited at A Space / Gunter Nolte, 1972, [2 pp.]. Artist file: "Gunter Nolte," A Space fonds.
- 13 Statement for an installation entitled "Faraday Cage," exhibited at A Space / Tom Sherman, May 16, 1973. Tom Sherman fonds. Courtesy of Tom Sherman.
- 14 "Faraday Cage" by Tom Sherman, exhibited at A Space / Photographer: Lisa Steele, May 16, 1973. Tom Sherman fonds. Courtesy of Tom Sherman.
- 15 Letter to Helke Hayden [technical layout of an exhibition at A Space] / David Askevold, February 27, 1975, [1 p.]. Artist file: "David Askevold," A Space fonds, gift of A Space 1996, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
- 16 "Ace Space at A Space" [exhibition flyer] / Dana Atchley [Ace Space], c. 1975, n. pag. Artist file: "Dana Atchley," A Space fonds.
- 17 Letter to A Space / Dana Atchley [Ace Space], April 9, 1975, [1 p.]. Artist file: "Dana Atchley," A Space fonds.
- 18 Letter to Marien Lewis / Suzy Lake [Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.], January 7th, 1975, [1 p.]. Organization file: "Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.," A Space fonds.
- 19 "The Western Front at A Space" [press release] / A Space, 1975, [1 p.]. Organization file: "Western Front Society," A Space fonds.



THE A SPACE NEWSLETTER

- THIS INFORMATION PACKAGE IS TO BE PREPARED AND MAILED MONTHLY IN A LARGE ENVELOPE IN ORDER TO PERMIT THE INCLUSIONS OF PAGES BY OTHER PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS. IT IS HOPED THAT THIS OPEN PUBLISHING SITUATION WILL PERMIT A WIDE EXCHANGE OF ARTICLES, CRITICISM, INFORMATION AND PIECES PREPARED SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS TYPE OF DISTRIBUTION. IN ORDER TO CLARIFY OUR INTENTIONS HERE THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE PACKAGE ARE SET:
- 1) CONTENT MAY NOT BE OF A COMMERCIAL OR PROMOTIONAL NATURE, EXCEPT WHERE IT INVOLVES A LEGITIMATE REQUEST FOR AID OR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF COMING EVENTS WITH NON-COMMERCIAL INTENT.
 - 2) SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 25TH OF EACH MONTH.
 - 3) THE COST OF PRINTING IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHOR(S). IF YOU WISH TO USE OUR XEROX COPY METHOD, THE ORIGINAL TEXT PLUS \$4.00 SHOULD BE MAILED TO A SPACE (PHOTOGRAPHS REPRODUCE COPIES XEROX AT PRESENT). IF YOU PRINT IT YOURSELF, THE COPIES XEROX AT PRESENT. THE SIZE MUST BE NO LARGER THAN 8 1/2 X 11 AND THE LINE THREE INCHES MUST BE SET.
 - 4) SUBMISSIONS WILL BE INCLUDED ACCORDING TO THE DATE THEY ARE RECEIVED AND THE REMAINING WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE PACKAGE FOR THE FOLLOWING MONTH.
 - 5) THE PREMISE ON WHICH THE MAILING LIST IS COMPILED IS BASED ON THE EFFICIENCY OF INFORMATION DISPERSAL. TEN ADDITIONAL ADDRESSES MAY BE SUBMITTED BY EACH SUBMISSION EACH MONTH. THESE WILL BE USED IN ACCORD WITH THE ORIGINAL PREMISE EXCEPT WHERE DUPLICATION OCCURS. PERSONS/ORGANIZATIONS WILL RECEIVE FIVE COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER WITH EACH SUBMISSION FOR ANY ONE MONTH.
 - 6) PERSONS OR GROUPS MAY MAKE USE OF THE MAILING AS OFTEN AS THEY WISH.
 - 7) SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO: A SPACE, 85 ST. NICHOLAS ST., TORONTO, 189, ONTARIO (PHONE: 920-3628 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION)

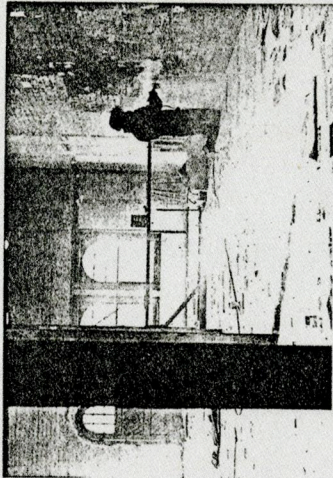


a space

INFORMATION PACKAGE # 1

MAY, 1971

A SPACE IS A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION. WE ARE CONCERNED WITH THE FLOW OF PEOPLE AND INFORMATION RELEVANT TO VISUAL ART. THE DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION ARE ALSO THOSE WHO CARE FOR ITS FUNCTIONS AND BASIC OPERATION ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS. OUR SUPPORT IS DERIVED PRIMARILY FROM OUR CAFE AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS, AS WELL AS PRIVATE DONATIONS. A SPACE BEGAN TO TAKE FORM IN SEPTEMBER OF 1970 AND WAS FORMALLY INCORPORATED JANUARY 6, 1971. OUR EARLY DEVELOPMENT WAS CONSIDERABLY AIDED BY AN INTERIM GRANT FROM THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS. OUR CAFE, VIDEO STUDIO, DARKROOM FACILITY AND A 2,200 SQUARE FOOT GALLERY WERE COMPLETELY OPERATIONAL AT 17 ST. JOSEPH ST., TORONTO, UNTIL MARCH 3, 1971, WHEN A FIRE RENDERED THE PREMISES UNUSEABLE. THE GALLERY IN OUR NEW LOCATION WAS PREPARED BY THE DIRECTORS AND FRIENDS IN LESS THAN THREE WEEKS (THE NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF ART EXHIBITION OPENED HERE APRIL 5TH). WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THE REMAINDER OF THE PREMISES FOR HOUSING OUR OTHER FUNCTIONS WHICH WILL INCLUDE THE ABOVE MENTIONED AS WELL AS A NEW INFORMATION/RESEARCH ROOM CONTINUOUS WITH THE CAFE. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS ABOUT POSSIBLE USES OF THE GALLERY SPACE DURING JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST.



85 st. nicholas st. toronto ontario 070-3628

The Toronto Space Proposals by the Association for Performances.

One evening with three pieces by each.
Three evenings with many pieces by each, each with an evening. *
No evenings with nothing by no one or anyone.
One week by air-mail.

One week for \$3000 or for \$300.
One minute for 3 cents.

PERFORMANCES. CHEAP. WANT TORONTO. GOTTA GET THERE.

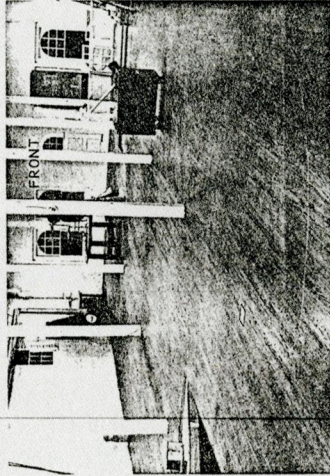
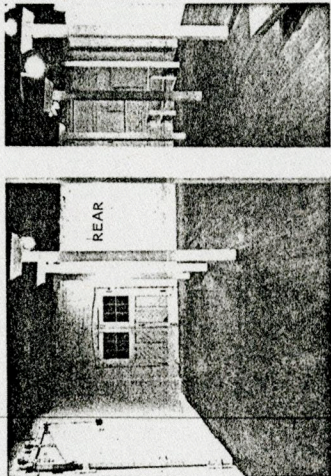
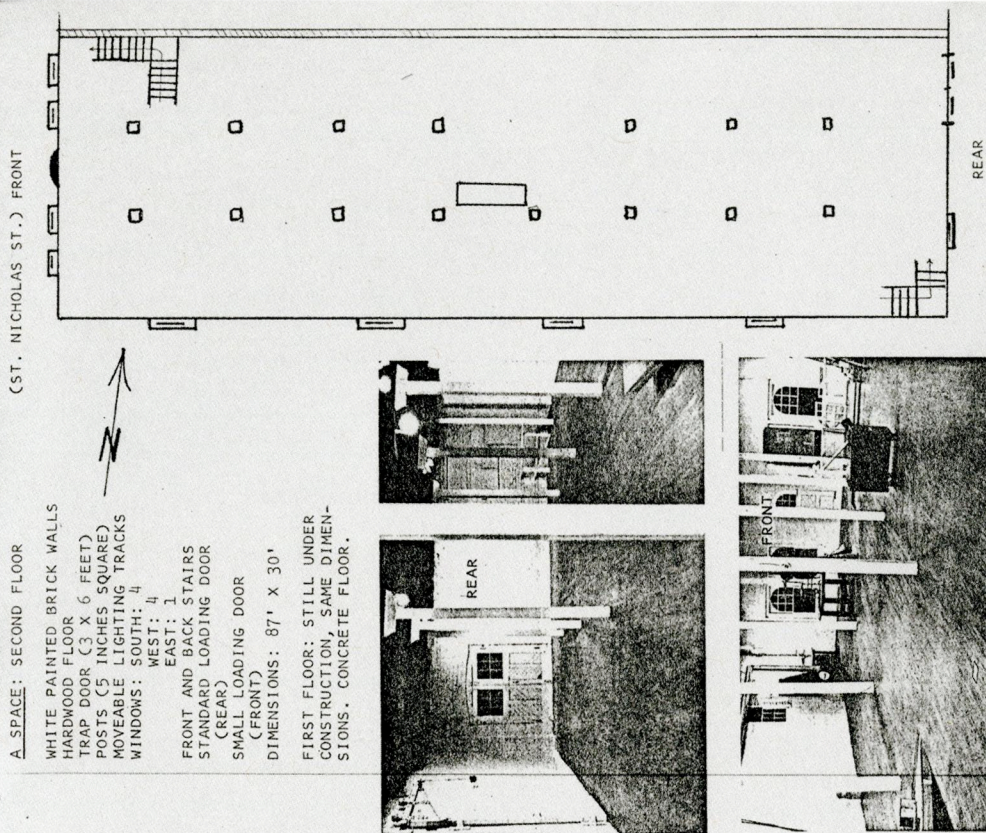
\$300 plus hospitality.

DIRT C EAP. CHEAP ART. BARGAINS GALORE!

*One week with something every ~~week~~ day and something every night. For instance we could play Tape Poems and Levine's Video Tape of the Fashion Show Poetry Event. Another night we could be nude and ask questions, etc.

Why do we want to be in Toronto?

John Perreault 6/71



NEWS

85 st. nicholas st., toronto, ontario 920-3628

NEWS #3 JULY, 1971

NEWS 15

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUALS TO DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION ON A REGULAR BASIS.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE CONTROL OF ART OPINION OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE "PROFESSIONAL" REVIEWERS.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLISH WORKS WHICH ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE PRINTED PAGE IN A CONTEXT WHICH IS NOT COMMERCIAL.

NEWS ALLOWS PERSONS TO PUBLISH VIEWS WHICH ARE NOT SUBJECT TO EDITORIAL CONTROL OF ANY TYPE.

WHILE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE FULL INFORMATION ON A SPACE ACTIVITIES THE A SPACE NEWSLETTER HAS NOW BEEN RENAMED NEWS IN ORDER TO MATCH THE OPENNESS OF ITS PUBLISHING AIMS. WE WELCOME NEWS, VIEWS, INFORMATION, PHOTOS, AND ARTICLES FROM ARTISTS, ART GROUPS, CURATORS AND PEOPLE. SEND 1 TO 3 PAGES (8 1/2"x11") BEFORE THE 25TH OF EACH MONTH. THE COST OF PARTICIPATING IS \$3.50 PER PAGE, (CHEAPER BY HALF FROM LAST MONTH DUE TO A NEW PRINTER). IF YOU CAN DO IT CHEAPER STILL SEND THE 300 COPIES PER PAGE. MATERIAL MAY NOT BE OF A COMMERCIAL OR PROMOTIONAL NATURE. TAKE ON THE TASK OF PROVIDING A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE WITH US.

NEWS IS CURRENTLY PREPARED AND MAILED FREE OF CHARGE EACH MONTH IN AN EDITION OF 300. THE FREE WORLDWIDE MAILING LIST IS COMPILED FOR AND DIRECTED AT THE MAXIMUM DISPERSAL OF INFORMATION... SO PLEASE POST IT OR PASS IT ON!

AS OUR BUDGET REMAINS TIGHT WE ARE UNABLE TO EXPAND THE FREE LIST BEYOND THE 300 MARK. SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW BEING SOUGHT AT \$7.00 FOR 12 ISSUES. AS SUBSCRIPTIONS INCREASE THE COST PER PAGE WILL DECREASE.

04.01

NEWS

NUMBER 4 AUGUST 1971

85 st. nicholas st., toronto, ontario 920-3628

video tapes

DENNIS OPPENHEIM

VIBRATION PIECE #1, TORONTO, 11/6/71.
DRUM PIECE, TORONTO, 12/6/71.
VIBRATION PIECE #2, TORONTO, 13/6/71.
LEAD SINK FOR SEBASTIAN, CALIF. 11/6/70.
TOE-NAIL SHARPENING, TORONTO, 15/6/71.
NAIL REMOVAL AND DRUM, TORONTO, 15/6/71.
FINGERNAIL REMOVAL, TORONTO, 12/6/71.

ROBERT BOWERS

BODY INVENTORY, TORONTO, 7/71, 12 MIN.
SEARCH, TORONTO ISLAND, 8/71, 20 MIN.

STEPHEN CRUISE

TENSE PIECE, TORONTO, 11/7/71, 20 MIN.
TATTOO, TORONTO, 18/10/70, 4 MIN.
PROBATION PERIOD, TORONTO, 13/5/71, 24 MIN.
BULLET THROUGH WAX, TORONTO, 16/5/71, 4 MIN.

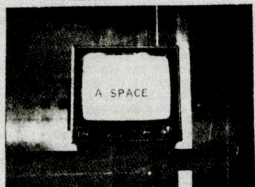
JOHN MCEWEN

BLOOD TAP, LEECH PLUS 2X3 INCH AREA OF WRIST, TORONTO, 11/7/71, 15 MIN.

VITO ACCONCI

WAITING ROOM, TORONTO, 17/7/71, 35 MIN.
SOUNDING BOARD, TORONTO, 21/7/71, 23 MIN.
WATERWAYS, TORONTO, 15/7/71, 20 MIN.
TWO TRACK, TORONTO, 21/7/71, 30 MIN.
FILLER, TORONTO, 19/7/71, 30 MIN.
EYE SPOTS, TORONTO, 20/7/71, 30 MIN.
SOUND BARRIER, TORONTO, 21/7/71, 20 MIN.
(ABOVE PIECES CONDENSED TO 1 HOUR TAPE)

August



ALL TAPES SHOWN BY REQUEST DURING AUGUST.

05

NEWS

NEWS NO 3 JULY 1971

85 st. nicholas st., toronto, ontario 920-3628

a space schedule

IAN CARR-HARRIS

sculpture

july 1-12

GENERAL IDEA

exposé - a video device

july 1-7

VITO ACCONCI

working with body and person

july 13-31

PERFORMANCE NIGHT JULY 21 8 p.m.

04.02

NEWS

NUMBER 5 AND 6 SEPTEMBER 1971

85 st. nicholas st., toronto, ontario 920-3628



This issue of NEWS is a double issue, September and October. Issue 7 will be mailed in November. To explain: all of the work done at A SPACE is accomplished by its four directors and a handful of friends, when they have the time. This includes all of the correspondence, arrangements for events at A SPACE, the writing of NEWS and construction, maintenance and repair. During the past month and a half we have been building a cafe, library, darkroom and video studio on the first floor. During this period we have been showing video tapes in the upstairs space and presenting, on the walls and tables, the photographs, etc., received in the mail. Otherwise, the space has been used mainly for unscheduled projects. (We welcome this latter use of the space at any time!)

We are seeking more information about what people are doing. Photos, statements or whatever you can send would be of interest to us. We are interested in meeting you not in promoting you. The mails are a good way of getting things started. When we receive something in the mail we put it out where other people can find it.

We still have the "what is A SPACE" pages and we will send them free to anyone who request them.

Anyone can publish up to three pages in NEWS, unedited. The only requirement is that you pay for your own printing. Either send the original(s) to us with \$4 per page for printing or send 300 copies of each page. We rule out commercial promotion. The page size must be 8 1/2 x 11 inches, or folded down to that size. The due date is the 25th of each month.

SUBMISSIONS FROM OUTSIDE CANADA: SEND ORIGINALS OR IF PRINTED, MARK PACKAGE "PRINTED MATERIAL". DECLARE PRINTING COST ONLY AND SEND US \$2.25 PER 300 PAGES. WE HOPE TO GET THINGS IN FREE BUT WE STILL HAVEN'T FOUND A WAY TO DO IT. ORIGINALS ARE BEST SINCE THERE IS NO DUTY. WE'LL SEND ORIGINALS BACK IMMEDIATELY.

06

Manpower and Immigration Main-d'œuvre et Immigration

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM

APPLICATION

PROGRAMME DES INITIATIVES LOCALES

FORMULAIRE DE DEMANDE

Official Use Only

Reservé à l'administration

Project No. - N° du projet

C.M.C. Code - Code du C.M.C.

Read Instructions Lire les instructions

1. Applicant (Name of Municipality, Organization or Private Group) - Auteur de la demande (Nom de la municipalité, de l'organisation ou du groupement privé)

Nightingale Arts Council

2. Address - Adresse

85 St. Nicholas St., Toronto 189, Ontario

Telephone No. - N° de téléphone

920-3628

3. Names of Officials and Titles - Noms des représentants officiels et leurs titres

Address - Adresse

Telephone No. - N° de téléphone

Robert J.-M. Bowers Pres.

85 St. Nicholas St., Toronto

920-3628

Marien Lewis Sec./Treas.

14 Temperance St, Toronto

920-3628

PROJECT DESCRIPTION - DESCRIPTION DE L'INITIATIVE

4. Describe work to be undertaken, how the project is to be managed and its contribution to community betterment. (Use separate sheet if necessary) Description des travaux qui seront entrepris, de la direction de l'initiative et de son apport au mieux-être de la collectivité. (Ajouter une autre feuille s'il y a lieu)

full description on separate sheets, pages 1 - 4

5. In what way does this project provide additional employment over and above that which would normally take place this winter? Comment cette initiative augmentera-t-elle le nombre des emplois disponible, cet hiver?

This project will provide employment to a number of people who will not only be usefully employed for the betterment of the community during the project but who will also be acquiring skills and information which will suit them both practically and technically in further future involvement in community development. The uniqueness of the program will provide a range of useful employment, training and problem solving which would otherwise not be available to these people this winter.

6. Within how many weeks from approval can work commence? Intervalle, en semaines, entre l'autorisation et le début des travaux.

IMMEDIATELY (December 1)

7. Project Location (municipality etc.) - Localité de l'initiative (municipalité, etc.)

Toronto (85 St. Nicholas St.)

8. Expected Start Date - Date de début prévue

Dec. 1

9. Expected Completion Date - Date d'achèvement prévue

may 31

10. Total Number of New Jobs Created by Project

12

10A. Number of Workers Required for each Month after Project Authorized

Transfer Totals from Item 16 of Worksheet	Nov.	Dec./Déc.	Jan./Janv.	Feb./Févr.	Mar./Mars	Apr./Avril	May/Mai	Total
Transcrire les totaux de la partie 16 de la feuille de calcul	xxx	11	11	11	11	12	12	68

ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS - Complete Attached "Work Sheet" and Transfer Totals from Item 16, 17 and 18 of Worksheet

COÛT PRÉVU DE L'INITIATIVE - Remplir la "feuille de calcul" annexée et transcrire les totaux (des parties 16, 17 et 18 de la feuille de calcul)	Nov.	Dec./Déc.	Jan./Janv.	Feb./Févr.	Mar./Mars	Apr./Avril	May/Mai	Total
11. Total Wages	X	4400.	4400.	4400.	5500.	4500.	6000.	29,500.
A Total - Other Costs	X	3214.	547.	547.	547.	747.	747.	6,414.
B Total - Other Costs	X	3214.	547.	547.	547.	747.	747.	6,414.
C Minus Expected Revenues	X	X	X	280.	330.	330.	330.	1,420.
D Net Project Cost (A + B - C = D)								\$34,494.

12. METHOD OF FINANCING (Sources of Funds) - FINANCEMENT (Sources des fonds)

	Wages - Salaires	Other Costs - Autres frais	Specify Other Sources - Autres sources, précisez
Total of 11D - Total de 11D	\$ 29,500.	\$ 6,414.	
Less from Other Sources - Moins fonds d'autres sources	X	X	DONATIONS TO N.A.C.
From Federal Government - Fonds provenant du gouv. fédéral	X	X	

13. If workers are not to be hired through Canada Manpower Centre, explain: - Si les travailleurs ne doivent pas être recrutés par l'entremise du Centre de Main-d'œuvre du Canada, expliquer:

Stephen Cruise and Robert Bowers are well trained and intimately familiar with the Toronto community. The success of the project will be aided greatly by their direction. Four other persons have donated aid in the past and have shown an interest in our community orientation. They are unemployed and their motivation will be valuable to the success of the project.

07.01

Question 4:

The work project is scheduled to take place between December 1st, 1971 and May 31st, 1972, employing a total of eleven people, with our building at 85 St. Nicholas St. as its physical center. It will be directed by two of our present staff members, Robert Bowers and Stephen Cruise. Stephen Cruise will direct a work program for six of the new employees. This program will be primarily concerned with community video utilization and will take place in three phases: construction, training and implementation. The construction stage involves the readying of a community facility for video workshops and productions. (The necessary space for this facility was set aside last April by the Nightingale Arts Council and is approximately 1,000 square feet with a 12 foot ceiling and newly laid concrete floors.) The new staff will comprise a group which at this stage will be engaged in the basic problem solving behind community facility design and functional accessibility. This involvement and experience will provide a sound basis for actual hands-on training, the second stage of this aspect of our proposed project. With our own basic video unit plus the loan of extensive additional equipment from the Ontario Educational Communication Authority, Utilization Branch, the facility will be fully equipped to meet the projected needs of the new staff for the remainder of the project. Training for the staff will come from three sources: (1) our regular staff (with over a year's experience with ½ inch video and more than 20 public workshops under their belts), (2) Jack E. Paterson (an experienced adult educator who has been a leader in Toronto in innovative uses of video on the community level) and, (3) O.E.C.A. Utilization Branch (which has offered additional technical know-how in regards to ½ and one inch video units.). O.E.C.A., in conjunction with our organization, has been planning a community video project with a nearby O.H.C. building tenant's association during the past month. This project will provide a potential specific community project for the newly trained staff.

[p. 2]

Stage three then, will be the implementation of newly gained skills and experience. Throughout this stage a primary vehicle for

providing further practical experience for the new staff will be regularly scheduled, full day and half day (evening) open workshops. These will be open to anyone in the community and will provide an avenue for new contacts for production generated by the community members themselves.

The second phase of the project will be a program directed by staff member Robert Bowers. This phase will employ a total of three people. Its purpose is to put into effect a reasonable and useful vehicle for community cultural information: services, resources, accessibility assessments, resource people, technical information and media input. Separate office space and telephone will be provided on the second floor of 85 St. Nicholas St. for these new staff members. The initial stage of this project will be a matter of familiarizing these people with the extensive files already existing here and studying the approaches of similar projects in other cities. In conjunction with this stage the two new staff members will be visiting critical community groups and government agencies (the Province of Ontario Council for the Arts, Peter Sepp, has expressed considerable interest in this project) in order to assess existing programs and directions. With this groundwork completed these people will have a basic grasp of the overall problem and needs for community information. The next stage will be to design an appropriate vehicle for gathering and disseminating information on a useful level. The two staff members will be provided with 35mm cameras and an emphasis will be placed upon visual information and documentation. A further exploration of established media channels and a directory of information will be prepared in the latter stage of the project. The final stage, a printed manual of specific details and approaches to facilities, resources, people and media will be designed by the information staff and distributed through appropriate channels. Hopefully, much of cost of printing will be recovered from sales of this publication.

[p. 3]

The third aspect of our proposed work program involves the hiring of a bookkeeper/typist for the duration of the project. This person will provide the necessary books for the handling of projects funds, prepare the payroll and perform whatever typing services possible to the overall project, with an emphasis on assisting the community information staff. This person will handle scheduling problems and make regular finan-

cial reports throughout the duration of the project.

During the last two months of the project a translator will be hired whose primary task will be to translate information for publication and newsrelease for the information staff. The anticipated emphasis here will be upon translation into French, however, by that time new, unexpected translation needs may arise. (We are thinking here particularly of the large Italian community in Toronto.)

[...]

Through the workshops, productions and publication the project will begin to give the community the information and the know-how for effective and independent action on their problems: co-operative day care centers could begin to explore the potential for video in training and feedback, as well as in-center, child oriented educational tapes; tenants associations and home owner groups could use video to describe their problems, taping sessions of meetings and arranging viewing by other groups or through cable broadcast; free-schools, who otherwise would not be able to afford such facilities would be able to explore the educational potential of video systems: community cultural groups of all sorts would have an opportunity to prepare tapes for educational distribution. The information publication will not only provide the overall community with long needed written and visual information, in two and possibly three languages, but will also provide an access vehicle for persons who are unfamiliar with the general community cultural activity in Toronto. Through sales, it may be possible to continue this aspect of the project many months beyond the end of the project.

Aid to Arts Organizations		SUPPLEMENT	
Statement of Corporate Information		2	
—Français au verso—		Sheet 1	
Initially, complete this form in full. Thereafter, submit changes only.		Date	
1 Name and Office Address		Feb. 3, 1972	
THE NIGHTINGALE ARTS COUNCIL OPERATING AS A SPACE 85 St. Nicholas Street Toronto 189, Ontario		Date of Fiscal Year End	
Telephone Area Code 416 Number 920-3628		April 1, 1972	
2 Details of Incorporation		Month Day	
Incorporated by		Year	
Federal Charter - Charity		Jan. 6, 1971	
Provincial Charter		Jan. 6, 1971	
—Province(s) Ontario			
(non-profit)			
Order-In-Council			
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter not yet received			
Type of charter applied for.....			
Date charter is expected.....19.....			
In terms of this charter, the organization is			
<input type="checkbox"/> Profit seeking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non profit seeking			
3 Aims of the Organization (Extract from inaugural document)			
"To encourage and promote in every way public, interest and support for the visual and performing arts and to provide centres and facilities for communication among those members of the community active or interested in the arts;"			
"To present to the public art exhibitions, literary presentations, photographic and film displays, dramatic, musical and dance performances and productions of all kind:"			
4 What major facilities do you own or regularly lease?			
Own		Lease	
		6,000 sq. ft. warehouse space two floors private entrance 85 St. Nicholas St.	
		Tenure of Lease	
		Five years as of April 1, 1971.	

a space

1.0 A situation for events, exhibitions, information, correspondence and publishing.

1.1 A work space. A situation for experimentation and exploration.

2.0 A concern for ideas, expressions and information relevant to contemporary cultural and individual growth.

2.1 Art.

3.0 A two story brick and wood building, 30 X 90 ft.

3.1 First floor, front: The Cafe (30 X 40 ft.), our major source of operational funds.

3.2 First floor, rear: The Pit (25 X 30 ft.), for video and audio recording, film theatre experiments, etc. (sound proofed: variable lighting: 90 amps.)

3.3 Second floor, front: (30 X 30 ft.), office space, information files, correspondence, lounge and video veiwing area, layout are for "X".

3.4 Second floor, center: (30 X 50 ft.): a sapce; white hard wood floor, variable lighting.

3.5 First and Second floor, rear: planned offset press and layout rooms.

4.0 Publications: "X", tabloid size, an expansion of NEWS, our previous publication.

4.1 Focus on evidence of individuals concerns and activities.

5.0 Regular event: open event, poetry, film, etc., Sunday evenings in The Cafe, 8-10P.M.

6.0 Equipment: 16mm and super 8 projectors, 1/2 inch video system, audio record and playback system, 35mm slide projector.

7.0 Correspondance (new material posted on bulletin boards).

8.0 Exhibitions and eventd: by application (further information by request).

8.1 A Space requires no fees, rentals or commissions. (Special printings, mailings, rentals, etc. are the artists responsibility.)


9.1 Hours:

A Space	Tues. - Sat.: 1P.M. to 8P.M.
The Cafe	Tues. - Thurs.: 11A.M. to 11P.M.
	Fri. - Sat.: till 1A.M.,
	Sun.: 2 - 11P.M.


85 St. Nicholas Street, Toronto, Ontario 920-3628

THE CAFE

85 St. NICHOLAS St



OPEN - TUES - THURS 11AM - 11PM
FRI & SAT 11AM - 1AM
SUNDAY 2 PM - 11PM
OPEN POETRY READING EVERY
SUNDAY AT 8 PM



A Space
85 St. Nicholas St.,
920-3628

Tues-Sat 1-8


Started at 17 St. Joseph St. in 1970, incorporated January 1971, Fire March 1971, reopened April 5, 1971 at present location.

Situation for experimentation and exploration. Showings of video-tapes, films, workshops; open to events, exhibitions and performances.

Operated by a charitable, non-profit corporation. Directors: Robert Bowers, Marien Lewis, Stephen Cruise, Steven Radlauer. Gov't grants and donations, Cafe income, video rentals, sale of publications.

Five specific areas: A Space-exhibition space and correspondence (upstairs), closed in summer. The Pit-video studio. Vehicle-resource publication. The Cafe-food, film, poetry, etc. Offset press facilities.

Video workshops (1 day sessions) and viewing room open to public. Darkroom resource for staff and visiting artists. Readings and other events in the Cafe.



Exhibitions by application; no fees, rentals, or commissions, (printing and mailing are the artists responsibility). Offset press facilities; moveable walls in gallery; one 16mm projector; floods-variable lighting; super 8 projector; 1/2" video system; audio recording and playback; 35 mm slide projector; minor tool room; publications X and Vehicle; gallery Ht-11', Wd-30', Lg-50'.

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM - PROGRAMMES DES INITIATIVES LOCALES

APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF PROJECT (D) - DEMANDE DE PROLONGATION DU PROJET (D)

NOTE: PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS AND TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY
NOTES: VÉRIFIEZ LES INSTRUCTIONS ET DACTYLOGRAPHIEZ OU ÉCRIVEZ EN LETTRES MOULÉES

Project Name / Nom du projet: Nightingale Arts Council

Project No. / N° du projet: 920-3628

Address / Adresse: 85 St. Nicholas St. Toronto, Ontario

Name of Officer and Title / Nom des responsables officiels et leurs titres: Robert Bowers (President)

Name of Representative / Nom du représentant: Stephen Cruise (Director)

Project Location / Lieu de location: TORONTO

Purpose of Project / But du projet: (Describe work to be undertaken - BUT DU PROJET (Décrivez le travail à accomplir))

The basic purpose of our project in the next two months will be to continue the essential thrust of our efforts of the past eight months. The video workshops and community projects will proceed with the addition of a program involving schools and universities now that they are back in session. The once per week public video showings will continue as well. The Toronto cultural resources publication (Vehicle) is still in progress. The information and photographs having been gathered we were able to acquire a loan to purchase an offset press, platemaker and camera. We will therefore be printing vehicle ourselves, the Vehicle staff thus learning not only the publishing and researching of a book but the printing of it as well. We expect that by the beginning of December we will have a fully functioning press and an experienced staff. The Couch House Press (Toronto) is providing us with considerable aid and instruction. Since we no longer need the aid of a translator or technical assistant (our present staff being well trained in the care and maintenance of our video equipment) we will be reducing our staff from 12 people to ten. With this basic core of people, experienced in working together, the next two months will be a solid and productive period.

TOTAL REVISED ESTIMATED COST OF PROJECT AS (C) OVERLEAF
COUT TOTAL DU PROJET AVENUE TEL QUE (C) AU VERSO

\$69,056.00

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER OF ORGANIZATION OR GROUP

I certify that the Project described above has been planned to correct additional needs of the community and that the Project is in accordance with the objectives of the Local Initiatives Program and all applicable Provincial and Federal requirements and conditions.

Signature / Signature: *Robert Bowers* Date / Date: Sept. 27, 1972 Title / Titre: President

FOR OFFICIAL USE / RÉSERVÉ À L'ADMINISTRATION

MAR 11 1972

36. phone a friend
37. Go and stay with a friend
38. Saturday afternoon unload car
39. start to install beam:
40. with plumb determine location
41. measure height: 11'8"
42. measure angle of rafter in relation to true level to determine degree of cut
43. place beam into miterbox
44. find clamps
45. secure with clamp and
46. cut beam at angle
47. trial placement: does not fit
48. which is just correct:
49. because by cutting off about 2" at bottom end of beam the thing fits
50. put beam now into location
51. angle drive screws from four sides at an angle through top part of beam into rafter
52. after removing the cut off 2" underneath beam the beam settles at angle off the vertical due to twisted top rafter
53. contemplate work (steve takes pictures)
54. go home and sleep
55. Sunday morning return and
56. clean out everything
57. sweep floor
58. spread out, roll out, plastic sheeting
59. with marion stretch out and align width
60. while marion takes video
61. staple down one end and
62. fit by cutting around posts
63. tpaee seams together first two than third plane
64. secure and check around beams
65. spread clay starting in the rear
66. get a large thin oval, claiming the space
67. clean up
68. put stuff into truck
69. drive through fog home to montreal
- 70.

a space

1. hear about them
2. visit them (drive to toronto)
3. show them photos
4. discuss ideas
5. agree to have an exhibition
6. arrange details
7. write letters from montreal
8. receive phonecall in return
9. keep notes
10. try out ideas in studio
11. go to europe
12. upon return, clean up studio
13. go to toronto to finalize date, details...
14. design announcement:
15. buy letteraset
16. fiddle with various ideas
17. select one
18. send off
19. worry about finding money
20. reserve 100 gallons of clayslip
21. reserve portable polysealer for rental
22. buy one roll of 1500 square feet polyethylene sheeting 6 mil thick
23. buy 11 feet long 6" by 6" thick beam
24. buy assorted hardware
25. found out that the firm sold the reserved portable poly-sealer
26. hence buy 2 rolls of 1/4" wide 1296" long scotch tape
27. pack tools and materials into car
28. phone a space to confirm arrangements
29. pick up the 100 gals. (40 boxes) of slip
30. give lecture at c.e.g.s.p.
31. drive to toronto
32. arrive at midnight
33. phone a space: where to stay?
34. go to a space
- 35.

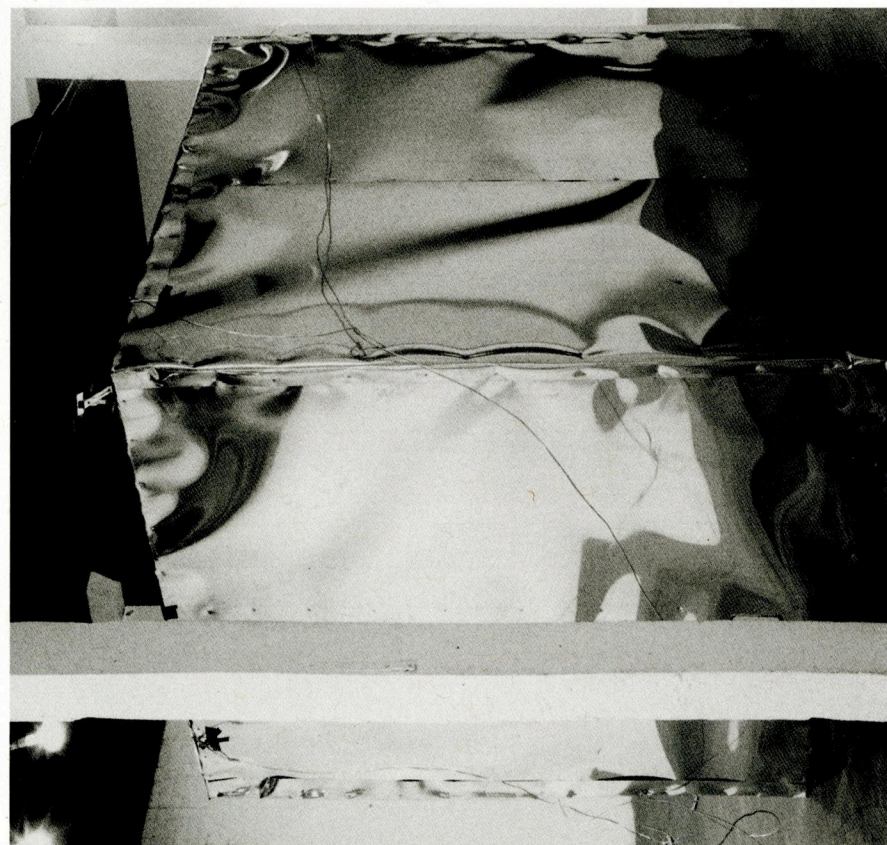
May 16, 1973

The metal enclosure situated in the room is a Faraday cage. Michael Faraday first used a device of this nature in 1846. This box is completely enclosed in aluminum sheeting that is grounded with heavy aluminum wire. The space within these aluminum walls is relatively free of electromagnetic fields of energy. Also in the room are two long wire antenna systems. These antennas are collecting electromagnetic radiation that is entering the room.

*At a meeting of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, London, May 16, 1889, Sir William Thomson said:

We all know how Faraday made himself a cage six feet in diameter, hung it up in mid-air in the theatre of the Royal Institution, went into it, and as he said, lived in it and made experiments. It was a cage with tinfoil hanging all around it; it was not a complete metallic enclosing shell. Faraday had a powerful machine working in the neighborhood, giving all varieties of gradual working up and discharges by inductive rush, and whether it was a sudden discharge of ordinary insulated conductors or of Leyden jars in the neighborhood outside the cage itself, he saw no effects on his most delicate gold leaf electroscopes in the interior.

His attention was not directed to look for Hertz sparks, or probably he might have found them in the interior. Edison seems to have noticed something of the kind in what he called "etheric force". His name "etheric" may, thirteen years ago, have seemed to many people absurd. But now we are beginning to call these inductive phenomena "etheric".



61

FEB. 27

DEAR ECKE,
ON THE NEXT PAGE IS A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE GENERAL SET.

4 MICS. (1 EXCLUDES THE VIDEO MIC.)
1 AMP
102 EXTERNAL SPEAKER/S
1 RAW SPEAKER (ABOUT 10" 12")
1 BOW (I'LL GET THIS UNLESS YOU KNOW OF A DOUBLE BASS BOW AVAILABLE)
I'LL BRING SOME CLAMP ON LIGHTS BUT WILL PROBABLY NEED OTHERS.

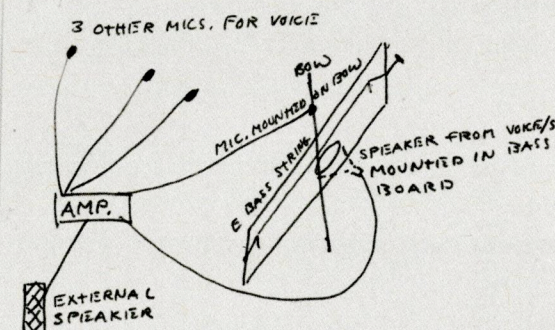
185' OF 16 M.M. TO BE TRANSFERRED TO COLOR TAPE -

(THE SCREENS I CAN BUILD WHEN I GET THERE - JUST NEEDED SOME TOOLS)

I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL A DAY OR SO BEFORE I LEAVE - LOOKING FORWARD.

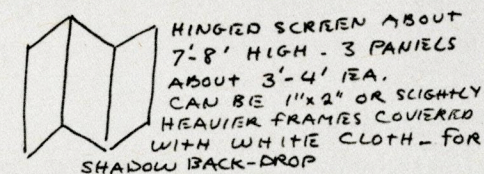
L - DAVID

61 O. STE CATHERINE MONTRÉAL H2X 1Z7 TEL: 844-9623



VOICE/S PLAY INTO SPEAKER. MIC. ON BOW PICKS UP STRING & VOICE/S.

OPTIONAL SWITCH FROM DIRECT RECORDING FROM THE 1 TO 4 MICS. TO PICK UP FROM EXTERNAL SPEAKER.



13

15



ACE SPACE
at A SPACE



Dana Atchley's Travelling Show
Friday December 5, 9 p.m.
85 St. Nicholas St. Toronto



9 April 75

BOX 183 CRESTED BUTTE COLORADO 81224

A Space
85 St. Nicholas
Toronto, Ontario

Dear A SPACE,

The Colorado Spaceman is in Fresno, California soaking up a bit of sun and lilac/rose...trying to arrange a fall in the East and tentatively planning to visit Toronto around the second week in October--subject to a little change this way or that. I would like to present The Spaceshow at A SPACE. How about it? There is talk of a group assault by the Western Front, either way would be OK if we can hook up. I'll need some dollars 'cause that's how I am (barely) surviving. I have been asking 200.00 per show or gate or this or that.

Drop me a line in Colorado and let me know what you think.

Best,

ACE

14

16

17

véhicule art (montréal) inc.

January 7th, 1975

Dear Marien-

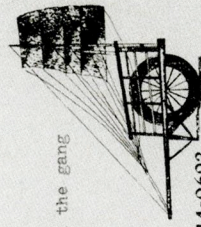
Hi! Hope that things are going well in Toronto. I was sorry to miss you on the train, and I looked for you at the station. Alas.... Our time will come.

Last night we had our meeting, and we brought up your proposal. We all agreed that ASpace and Véhicule must get together. Sure, we support all of the points mentioned in the letter, and a lot more will come up in the midst of conversation.... The one change of plans concerns the dates; several of the members teach, or work, and can't take off time during the week. Could it be a week-end? If that is o.k. on your side, these are the people who are available: Adela Garcia, Allan Bealy, Chantal Pontbriand, Claude DeGuise, Trevor Goring, Guy Lavoie, Chris Richmond, Ola Van Buren, Andy Dutkewich, Alex Neumann, Bill Vazan, Pat Darby, and Si Dardick. There might be alterations, of course. But we'd like the administration, print shop, video, documentation, and publicity people to be there (that the information is as first-hand as possible).

Have you had any word from Phillip Fry? Let us know when you can, and what help that we can be for the meeting's preparation....

Thanks a lot for the initiation of the project.

Yours,
Guy and the gang



61 O. STE CATHERINE MONTRÉAL h2x 1z7 tél: 844-9623

A SPACE
85 St. Nicholas Street
Toronto M4Y 1M8
964-3627

THE WESTERN FRONT at A SPACE (part one)

September 2-27 1975

THE WESTERN FRONT is a west coast parallel gallery run, and lived in, by a group of artists whose mutual interests are best served in a self-contained living/working environment. The founding members purchased an old Knights of Pythias lodge in Vancouver within which they work and perform, and through which they sponsor works and performances by artists local to Vancouver and visiting artists from across Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

SPOTS BEFORE YOUR EYES

The exhibition consists of the complete archives of Dr & Lady Brute, who have been collecting leopard skin imagery and paraphernalia for the past five or six years. The gallery exhibit will also provide the context for a number of special events, including two evenings of video screenings and three evenings of Cabaret-style performance by Dr Brute and the Brute Saxs and a host of local talent.

THE NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE DANCE SCHOOL OF VANCOUVER'S PARIS SHOW

September 16-27 the brainchild of Glen Lewis (whose most recent major work, the Great Wall of 1984, was recently unveiled in Ottawa at the National Research & Technology Library). This exhibition consists of everything collected by Mr Lewis (aka Flakey Rosehip) at the Canada Trajectories show in Paris in 1973. Mr Lewis will also be mounting a number of Special Events in the context of this show, including video evenings, a Radio Play written especially for this Toronto appearance by the Western Front's LUXE RADIO PLAYERS, and a sound environment and concert by Western Front resident avant garde composer, Martin Bartlett. A Calendar of Events will be published late in August to announce the dates for the various Special Events.

For further information call Vic d'Or: 964-3627

A Space is open Tuesday to Saturday 12 noon to Six pm.

- 01 Minutes of meeting / Gary Coward, Jean-Marie Delavalle, Andy Dutkewich, Dennis Lukas, Suzy Lake, Kelly Morgan, Gunter Nolte, Milly Ristvedt, Henry Saxe, Normand Thériault, Serge Tousignant, December 11, 1971, [2 pp.]. Po27.1c/1, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds, Concordia University Archives, Montréal.
- 02 "Véhicule" project proposal to the Canada Council for the Arts [English] / Véhicule Art, 1972, [7 pp.]. Po27.3a/1, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds. This proposal was also written in French.
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- 04 Form to gather data in view of assembling a directory of artists working in the greater Montreal area / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., c. 1972, [1 p.]. Po27.4c/2, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 05 "Mailing List Use Contract Agreement" / Ken Friedman [Fluxus West], c. 1972, [3 pp.]. Po27.4c/2, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 06 "Véhicule 'Phase II' A Proposed Local Initiative Project in Reply to Question Number Seven, Manpower and Immigration, Local Initiatives Program 1972-1973" / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1972, [13 pp.]. Po27.1b/2, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 07 "Quebec Workmen's Compensation Commission Certificate: Local Initiatives Program Project no. H 5871 Véhicule Art (Montréal) Inc. 61 Ste-Catherine St West, Montréal 129, PQ, 1973" / Manpower and Immigration, Po27.1b/2, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 08 "Guide à l'intention des parrains: Programme des initiatives locales 1973-1974" / Ottawa: Manpower and Immigration, 1973, 30 pp. Po27.1b/1, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds. Instruction manual for administrators of Local Initiatives Program projects.
- 09 "Projets d'initiatives locales 73 (1^{er} décembre au 31 mai)" / Montréal: INFOMÉDIA QUÉBEC, 1973, [3 pp.]. Po27.1b/1, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds. List of projects supported by the Local Initiatives Program in the region of Montreal between December 1st and May 31st, 1973.
- 10 "Véhicule Art: To All Schools And Community Groups 'Newsletter'" / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1973, [1 p.]. Po27.4e/1, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.

- 11 Instructions sent to William Vazan for a Wall Drawing to be realized in Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.'s premises / Sol LeWitt, 1973. Item photographed as it was displayed during Documentary Protocols II.
- 12 "A Wall Drawing" [Vehicule Art (Montréal) inc. artist making the drawing] / photographer: Jean-Marie Delavalle, 1973. Po27.5b/12, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 13 "A Wall Drawing" [student making the drawing] / photographer: Jean-Marie Delavalle, 1973. Po27.5b/12, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 14 Questions by Véhicule members addressed to high school and CEGEP students during the making of the wall drawing / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1973. Po27.5b/12, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 15 "LeWitt Education Report" / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1973. Po27.5b/12, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 16 Form for exhibiting at Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. [completed by Michael Tims of General Idea] / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1974. Po27.5b/37, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 17 Letter to Suzy Lake / [David] Gordon [Forest city Artists Association, London, Ontario], March 16, 1974, [1 p.]. Po27.7a/3, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 18 Letter to Suzy Lake / Stansje Plantenga, Powerhouse Gallery, April 1st, 1974, [1 p.]. Po27.7a/3, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.
- 19 Form designed to gather information on galleries [filled by Powerhouse Gallery Studio (19.01) and Galerie de l'UQAM (19.02)] / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1975. Po27.4c/7, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds.

Saturday. December 11, 71

Those present: Jean-Marie Delavalle
Gunter Nolte
Gary Coward
Kelly Morgan
Andy Dutkewich
Dennis Lukas
Henry Sax e
Norman Theriault
Serge Tousignant
Milly Risvet
Suzy Lake

Documents presented: Dutkewich- (2) proposals
Nolte (2) Hardcore
Name lists
Lake (2) proposals

Private money, industrial support- Suzy Lake
Always strings attached to outside money
All agree to approach Canada Council for financial support

Equipment: printing necessary for dissemination of information
Tom to investigate roneo printing

Equipment available for showing ~~work~~ work:
16 mm sound projector
screen Carousel slide projector
video tv and tape deck

- Kelly to investigate donations from Kodak & Chemical co.'s

Our function as an information center-
Liaison would be necessary with Theriault, since he is fully into that at Univ. de Que.

primary info- art itself, shows
secondary info- art game, where, what?
tertiary info- art mag aspect

Gallery- Hours: noon -10 p.m.
basically, one week shows (10 day shows, day-long, etc)
no sales, collections prospective buyer can and will
be encouraged to visit artists' studios
salaried manager

Outside contacts for send-outs

PREAMBLE

The idea of a cooperative gallery/center is certainly not a new one. The thought has been voiced at one time or another by all of us who believe that an artist's first responsibility is to explore the directions dictated by his own personal aesthetic philosophy, whether the same receives acceptance by a wide audience or not, and who feel that those institutions the artist is most dependent on for communication of his work are generally either unwilling or unable to support art that challenges the established limits of acceptance.

In Montreal this situation is particularly acute. This city has the largest urban concentration in Canada, yet at least the three largest cities, it continues to be the most difficult one for a contemporary (practicing/relatively young/innovative) artist to work and live in. Potential and energy are constantly being frustrated by an almost total lack of understanding, interest and involvement. A cycle has emerged over the years that read roughly as follows: inadequate public exposure, inadequate education of the public, inadequate response, therefore inadequate support.

If we begin by examining the public museums and art centres those institutions most responsible for educating and soliciting the active involvement of the public, we find almost complete failure on their part to deal with art that concerns itself with contemporary art values and new directions. Aside from the fact that they are sometimes victims of the cycle they have helped to create, it seems that the nature of these establishments by their very structure is to crystallize and too often become dependant on interests quite removed from art interests. It is not our intention to place blame in any one place, on any person or persons -the situation has perhaps more causes than we can have knowledge of- but one thing we are very much aware of is that there is no truly active or effective champion of the contemporary artist presently working with these institutions.

It is not surprising then that the small percentage of private galleries which undertake the exhibition of new or different art do so only rarely. They can hardly be expected to take upon themselves the responsibility of exhibiting contemporary art when there is no educated public for it. To do so would amount to financial suicide as witness

the failure of the one or two galleries that have made the attempt.

We don't believe that the current state of affairs can or will be changed overnight, and rather then wait indefinitely for the museums and galleries to change policies and functions we are far from satisfied with we suggest an alternative.

[p. 2]

AIMS

We hope to provide a non-profit, non-political centre directed by and for artists, that by its very operating structure will remain open and unbiased to changing forms and expressions in all the arts, particularly the visual arts, and that will remain a vital place for both artist and public. Our intentions go far beyond serving the needs of the artists making this application. As the initiators of this proposal it is obvious that each of us would hope to use a portion of the space at some time, but we are in complete agreement that it will be used by a much larger group of artists and that an even larger general public will benefit by its realization.

We believe that by the operating structure we have chosen we can:

- a) offer exhibition space to a large number of visual artists in Montreal and other parts of the country which will serve to strengthen the lines of communication among artists and between artists and the public,
- b) integrate the work of people in other disciplines (such as music, poetry, dance and theatre) who have similar needs and desires for an alternative to existing institutions,
- c) give much greater priority to the needs of the individual artists regarding the space and time in which to perform or exhibit their work than present institutions are willing or able to give,
- d) contribute to the art education of the general public by actively encouraging the schools, universities, art groups and individuals to visit the space, and by actively working with them and making as much information as possible available to them concerning both work inside and outside the space,
- e) provide a space that will be comfortable for both artist and the general public, and that will encourage dialogue between the various art disciplines and their respective publics.

Don Judd

Suzanne Lake

It's obvious that some alternative to the present gallery situation is needed. Galleries exist primarily as businesses, not as support for art. While they offer some support, they get more out of art than they put into it. Anyway, galleries are only one factor of the support and are not sufficient. There should be a lot more financial support from the government and artists should decide how the money is used. A proposal like the one drawn up by Vehicule Inc. is one way of doing this. Their proposal is carefully considered and clearly organized; it's one of the best I've ever seen and deserves a lot of support from the government. It should happen in the United States as well as in Canada.

Don Judd

rps

APPLIES TO "C" LIST ONLY

Mailing List Use Contact Agreement

As you may know, mailing lists are both tools for access and weapons for power and commercial uses. You may be aware of my work in the 60's through now in the area of making mailing lists of all sorts of people available to all sorts of other people. This work is very important, and I continue to encourage contacts and interchange.

While this process has been terribly expensive and time-consuming, I feel that it has been very worthwhile. We plan at Fluxus West to continue this work, and I hope to make our mailing lists available to anyone who needs them or wishes to use them.

There is a second area of mailing lists which is a little touchier, however. That is the subject of persons who have given their names, or whose names have been given, to receive information on specific subjects, artists, or areas of information BUT NOT PUBLICLY RELEASED OR USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. In accepting these names, and in sending them to others selectively according to the purposes for which they were given, I promised to respect the wishes and the privacy of these names and addresses. For whatever reason these people have made this request, I am ethically obliged to honor it.

In the beginning of the work of contact and information interchange, I noticed a great reluctance on the part of many people to share their lists. These lists, as classified information, as keys to restricted access, were thus a source of power in a political sense. Over 8 years of effort has changed that situation. At Fluxus West, in cooperation with Image Bank, Hanns Sommer, Gosh, International Artists Cooperation, David Hopson, Hans Sommer, Kallmann, and many others who have specifically wished NOT to be credited for their work, made it possible. In the years since Fluxus West first began to bring out the major contact lists - still the best and most comprehensive such lists, and the only lists continually made available in complete form on request (over 4,000 names and addresses from around the world) - a new situation has come up. This has been a rush to bring out the "complete" listings with certain definite slants and biases, in reality, therefore, smaller and more restrictive lists, and the use of lists for various commercial and/or ethically questionable purposes.

In particular, the most repugnant situation has been the change from total secrecy and privacy about lists to the publication not only of names which belong on such lists but the publication of names whose privacy has been requested.

While we wish to continue the publication of the thousands of people who wish to be known, we wish entirely to stop the practice of divulging names of those people who do not wish to have their names released or used in any other manner than that for which their names were given.

I am therefore instituting an agreement with anyone to whom I will be giving lists, in order to assure that my promises will be maintained in regard to those individuals.

continued on Page 2

VEHICULE ART

(MONTREAL) INC. 61 ST-CATHERINE O.W. MONTREAL 129 P.Q. TEL 844 9623

Véhicule travaille présentement à mettre sur pied un bottin d'artistes de la région de Montréal. Ce bottin comprendra les noms, adresses, numéros de téléphone, l'expérience et les majors préoccupations de tous les artistes sérieux travaillant dans une démarche quelconque de l'art contemporain. Nous répertorions aussi les sujets sur lesquels travaillent les artistes et les groupes qu'ils rencontrent ainsi que ceux qui sont disponibles à entrer leur atelier.

Par le biais de ce bottin, Véhicule espère mettre en contact les écoles, l'CEEP, universités et groupes de citoyens intéressés par un tel service avec les artistes qui offrent tout à la fois le matériel et la bureaucratie qui pourrait voir l'organisation d'un tel service.

Si vous êtes intéressé à ce que votre nom apparaisse dans ce catalogue, nous apprécierions recevoir, par le retour du courrier les informations mentionnées au questionnaire ci-joint. Plus tard nous nous mettrons en contact avec des groupes. Si vous n'êtes pas intéressé, avertissez-nous la gentillesse de nous retourner le formulaire en question. Ainsi nous saurons définitivement que vous n'êtes nullement intéressé.

NOI
ADRESSE
TELEPHONE
EXPERIENCE

INTERETS PRINCIPAUX

Sculpture
Peinture
Gravure
Photographie
Musique
Théâtre
Danse
Architecture
Autre (à spécifier s.s.p.)

INTERESSE A RENOUEVER

Etudiants des Universités
Etudiants de l'CEEP
Etudiants du Collège
Etudiants du Primaire
Groupes des Citoyens

INTERESSE A COURRIER MON ATELIER POUR DES VISITES ORGANISEES PAR DES GROUPES
OUI NON

INTERESSE SUR DES PROJETS DE VIDEO EN COLLABORATION AVEC L'EQUIPE DE
VEHICULE (si les projets doivent être soumis par écrit)

REMARQUES SUPPLEMENTAIRE SUR VOIRE PROPRE TRAVAIL
OUI NON

DESIREZ-VOUS PARLER EN FRANCAIS OUI EN ANGLAIS
POUVEZ-VOUS OFFRIRE CE SERVICE BENEVOLEMENT OUI NON
SUGGESTIONS:

Nous apprécierions grandement recevoir des diapositives ou photographies du travail que vous faites. Cette documentation pourrait servir à compléter la 'Banque d'information' de Véhicule.

VEHICULE

« PHASE II »

a proposed local initiatives project
in reply to question number seven

Manpower and Immigration
Local Initiatives Program 1972-1973

VEHICULE ART (montreal) INC.

INTRODUCTION

VEHICULE ART (Montreal) INC. is a legally-constituted centre established under the third part of the Canada Companies Act as a public, non-profit, non-political, cultural and educational co-operative service. (See Appendix 2, documents No. 1 and No. 2.) It is presently operating under assistance from the Canada Council. (See Appendix 1, No. 2)

Véhicule functions to provide a space for the community in which to encounter current art and ideas through as many forms as these processes involve, i.e., painting, drawing, sculpture, concepts, theatre, music, film, poetry, and other creative activities. While emphasis is towards the visual arts, the space is available for the functions of the other arts. Because such a service was not provided by local galleries and museums, it is believed that the problems of the artist vis-a-vis the local community could be ameliorated by a center that provided these services and that also endeavoured to help the public become involved with the cultural resources of the area. Participatory response has so far justified the creation of this space, but as all members of the group, with the exception of the manager, are all unsalaried professional artists or artist-teachers, Véhicule is at the stage where it needs added assistance to expand its original program and fulfill its defined aims and objectives. (For additional information on the origin of the centre please refer to the « Preamble » and « Aims » of the Véhicule proposal submitted to the Canada Council in Appendix 1, No. 1.)

As the centre wishes to develop and further its objectives, a need for salaried people is required to handle the extensive and varied amount of work involved in making this viable as possible and successful in its goal as a community service. With the added strength of salaried people and a printing co-operative, it is expected that our goals

will have even greater chance of reaching more people with information and a better functioning organization which would make the service we provide even more useful to the community at large. Artists in Montreal have suffered from the gap in educated response to their work, a problem not found, or certainly to a lesser degree, in other Canadian centers, particularly Toronto and Vancouver. Having spent a year in examining this problem and having experienced this problem ourselves at some point in our careers, we firmly believe that the services our organization supplies and endeavours to expand are definitely of value to the community and all of its members. Our location is strategically accessible on St. Catherine St. in the central core of the city (and near Place des Arts and Théâtre du Nouveau Monde) such that groups or individuals from all parts of the city could be involved in our activities.

If we choose to be explicit here, it is to help situate those persons considering our application in the light of the artistic relationship existing in the community.

The position, "artist", has always been the most precarious of all professions. The inability of society to define « art », except in purely subjective terms, has perpetrated the reality of the artist spending the greater part of his life in total poverty (with only a few exceptions) yet by no choice other than his own subjective decision to pursue activity that he alone defines as "art." When considering the situation in Montreal alone, we cannot help but realize that at least since the 19th century such activity in its own time was poorly supported and even then, thanks to private patronage. In the 20th century the lack of adequate support here has resulted in the loss of many of our country's cultural assets, ultimately weakening the strength of our society and identity.

[p. 2]
[...]

We believe that the two "floating jobs" applied for (see Job Profiles for more details) are absolutely essential to our goals as they will enable unemployed artists to be employed, even for short periods, to have money for the services their work demands, and to experience the effect of encountering the public in a very direct way. By these jobs at least two or more artists per month exhibiting in the space will be working at communication. They will make themselves available for an exchange with people responding to our initiatives and they can discuss their creative goals. Our jury

system, made up of unpaid artist volunteers, is of a sufficiently high professional level that showing in the space becomes something desirable to the educated artistic community. We believe that by encouraging the public to participate in open discussions and events in the space, we can help the total community realize its consciousness and relationship to the art activity done in our time. Hopefully, this should help develop a situation in which art activity can find more patronage by education and that the community not involved in art activity as yet, can become interested, if not enthused, responsive, and active in its existence as a social phenomena.

[...]

We propose, through the local initiative program, to hire a total of eighteen (18) persons divided on the basis of two operating groups whose interests are interlinked but whose tasks and administrative orientation require that they be defined under two group headings.

The first group of ten people will be involved in the broad activities of the centre. These include (i) a co-operative manager, (ii) a secretary-bookkeeper, (iii) an educational animator, (iv) an information co-ordinator-editor, (v) a public relations fund raiser, (vi) a photographer-cataloguer, (vii) a maintenance man, (viii) a full-time evening manager, and (ix) and (x) two floating jobs enabling the center to hire on a short-term basis up to one month, two artists-performers or other creative persons who are in the process of putting together an exhibition, performance, lecture series, events or other activity within this center.

We propose, under the second group of eight persons to establish a fully operational offset printing co-operative whose basis of operation would be to service the printing and information projects of the centre, to act as an educational tool for artists, art students and other people interested in the use of offset printing as a creative tool, to publish and distribute printed works deemed worthy, necessary or of value to greater artistic and cultural enrichment of the community, to offer its services to similar non-profit bodies in need of printed material, either on a cost basis or at a level sufficient to help in the upkeep of the co-operative, and to undertake commercial printing as a means to obtain revenue for the continuing operation

[p. 5]

and/or expansion of the co-operative work shop endeavours.

The staff will include (i) a print-ing co-operative manager, (ii) and (iii) two pressmen, (iv) a camera man, (v) layout man, (vi) typesetter, (vii) platemaker and (viii) binder.

[p. 9]

With particular reference to the local initiative project, we anticipate no difficulty in the continuity of this program within the present framework of the center. The offset printing workshop will have gained sufficient experience and know how to make it a viable and active group; there is a large body of groups, organizations, artists, individuals within the Montreal community in need of the type of co-operative set up proposed to assure its continued use. While it will be difficult to maintain the larger number of persons concerned with the educational-information-exhibition-events side of the center, it is our intentions to resume this program in the fall and winter seasons of next year, however modified. A partial key to this will be the result of our campaign of support within the community to be undertaken by the members of Véhicule with the assistance of the public relations person outlined in this local initiative program. We have set a minimum goal of obtaining support in the area of \$5000.00. It is our hope and expectations to do much better, thereby assuring a degree of continuity with the present undertaking.

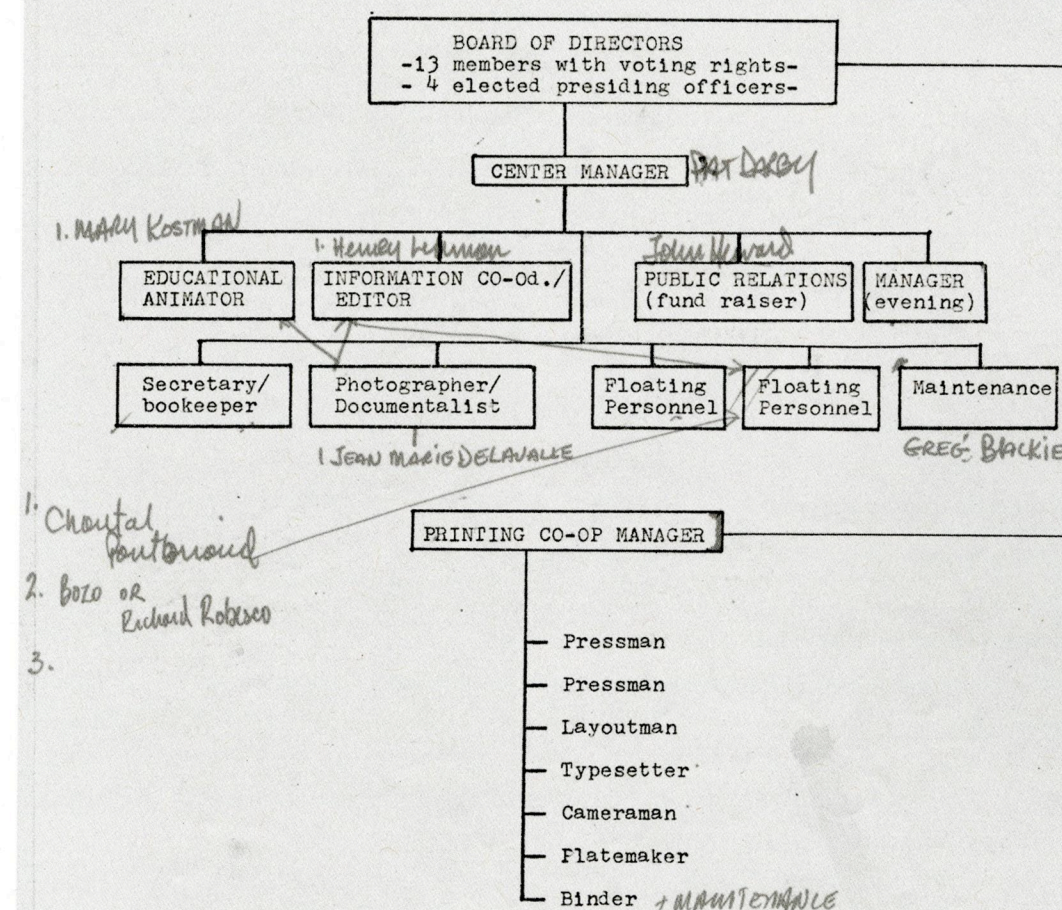
[...]

ORGANIZATION

All organizations have some form of operating structure. Under this project we have drawn up an organigram which outlines the flow of decision-making and the respective areas of responsibility. This is followed by an outline profiling the various jobs discussed under this project. A copy of Véhicule Art's by-laws have been enclosed as a supporting document in the outline of the structure, (see Appendix II, no. 3).

diagram 1.

- VEHICULE "PHASE II" -



06.02

VEHICULE ART

(MONTREAL) INC. 61 St. CATHERINE O.W. MONTREAL 129, P.Q. TEL: 844 9623

TO ALL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Vehicle is a new concept in art galleries. Located at 61 St. Catherine St. W., it is financed by the Canada Council and specializes in shows of an experimental and non-commercial nature. The emphasis at the gallery is on public participation with prominent artists.

In collaboration with artists, Vehicle is currently initiating an educational program in the arts which will reach far into the community. Artists and members of the gallery have put together multi-media art kits which consist of photos, videotapes, recorded statements and written instructions. Students and teachers, with the aide of an animator from the gallery, will work with these kits which are intended to clarify in a simple, straightforward manner, the important aspects of contemporary art and place recent art events in the context of art history. These kits are being developed for university, CEGEP, high school and elementary school students. Vehicle is in contact with all Montreal CEGEPs and Universities as well as fifty high schools and elementary schools.

Vehicle's educational art program also includes inviting groups to the gallery to meet and speak with individual artists on an informal basis. This aspect of Vehicle's program is especially exciting because it permits individuals from all sectors of the public to ask questions and to express personal opinions directly to the artists.

Vehicle has also established a service by which school and community groups can arrange through the gallery to visit artist's studios. This is helping destroy the notion of the artist as loner and permits the public to participate in their cultural heritage in the making.

This educational program seeks not only to bring art out of its ivory tower but also to bring the joy and the fun of contemporary art to the general public. The program encourages the public to enjoy and to be aware of art as it happens.

EVENTS AT VEHICLE REQUIRING GROUP PARTICIPATION

SOL LEWITT'S WALL DRAWINGS

Execution of Wall Drawings from Sol LeWitt (well-known New York contemporary artist currently involved in conceptual art) by students themselves. The teacher or professor telephones Vehicle to give the dimensions of the walls of the classroom, lunchroom, etc., where they would like to have the event take place. (The larger the room, the better it is.) Then we give him instructions for drawing a grid on Kraft paper which has been tacked or taped to the walls. We then arrange a date for our animators to visit the school. When they arrive, they give specific instructions to the students who execute the wall drawings accordingly. Afterwards the drawings are discussed with the students and placed in the context of art history.

This event can be scheduled any time during the next four months and requires a minimum time of one and a half hours.

Materials required: Roll of any kind of paper 4 feet wide, 2 ladders, 4 blackboard compasses, chalk (dark colour), string, pieces of wood to be used as rulers (approx. 5 feet long), 2 easels.

MARCH 1 - 16: SOUND AS VISUAL/ VISUAL AS SOUND

In the Vehicle exhibition space. An experimental exhibition (works from Canadian, American and European artists) requiring the public to use videotapes, tape recorders and slides to transform sound into visual associations, i.e., hearing becomes seeing and seeing becomes hearing. We are organizing visits from two different schools each day and participating artists will be on the premises to discuss the exhibits with the students.

If you are interested in having your class visit this exhibition, please telephone at your earliest possible convenience because we have space left for only 20 schools. The minimum time required for this exhibit is one hour.

MARCH 19 - 31: BOURDON, CARON, DESAUTELS, LEDUC - PHOTOGRAMS

Exhibition at Vehicle requiring student participation. Capsulized photography course. Three separate teams of professional photographers to teach: 1) Photograms, 2) Construction of pin-hole camera and basic photographic theory, 3) Animated film on photographic paper through use of a special machine (See details below). All equipment for this show is provided by us. There will be a darkroom set up on the premises. Visits can be scheduled by telephoning Vehicle any time before March 7th.

1) BOX CAMERA AND PHOTOGRAPHIC THEORY SECTION

Available March 19 - 31

a) This project requires groups to arrive equipped with a light-proof container, measuring as closely as possible 4 inches wide and 5 inches long x 6 inches high. For example, a shoe box, a 48 oz. juice can, a coffee can. These container must be painted black on the inside. (Be careful not to damage the ends.) The students will then take photographs with these self-made cameras.

b) Slide Show: 75 - 300 slides will be projected to explain photogram photography, the history of photography, colour photography and famous photographs.

Time required: 45 minutes to 3 hours, according to the size of the group and the time available.

Commission des accidents du travail de Québec
Quebec Workmen's Compensation Commission

1973

190 390 A

PHOTOGRAPHING, PRINTING, EDITING, ANIMATION

PROJET D'INITIATIVE LOCALE NO: H 5871
VEHICULE ART (MONTREAL) INC.
61 ST-CATHERINE ST. WEST,
MONTREAL 129, PQ.

PROJETS D'INITIATIVES LOCALES 73 (1er décembre au 31 mai)		
PERSONNES AGES		
✓ Multiples Services Ménagers 190 est, rue Dorchester Tél: 661-1047.	No. 10,01	Secteur: Grand Montréal Services: Nettoie, réparation, etc... Centre de dépannage - rembourrage
Education Sociale 2310, rue Pierre-Bernard Tél: 354-1171.	No. 11,12	Secteur: Mercier Services: explication de lois: Ass.-Chômage, régime des Rentes, Allocation Familiale, Rapport d'impôt.
✓ Atelier Populaire du meuble 2625, rue Albert Tél: 931-3874.	No. 11,10	Secteur: Petite Bourgogne Services: Réparation mobilier, rembourrage, collecte et don de meuble.
T.A.D. Associés 140 ouest, Crémazie, Suite 703 Tél: 388-6831.	No. 11,19	Secteur: Grand Montréal Services: assistance physique pour tous services.
✓ Cercle Culturel Petite Bourgogne 2461 ouest, St-Jacques Tél: 932-7014.	No. 11,54	Secteur: Petite Bourgogne Services: Travaux ménagers.
Sentier du Lac Foster 266-14e av., Ville des Laurentides Tél: 1-223-3807.	No. 12,51	Secteur: provincial Services: accès à un territoire paysagé, observation de la faune et flore.
✓ Sentier d'Entraide 351, rue Marie-Anne Tél: 282-3805.	No. 13,87	Secteur: Services: dépannage-transport.
Job-Aid 6260, Victoria, Suite 106 Tél: 731-3503.	No. 14,02	Secteur: Grand Montréal Services: trouver travail dans maisons privées.
Place Vermeil 1501, rue Alexandre-De-Sève Tél: 527-2324.	No. 16,09	Secteur: Centre-Sud Services: S'occuper des vieillards, banque de logements.
Centre Dépannage en électronique 3225 ouest, St-Jacques Tél: 932-6967.	No. 18,29	Secteur: Grand Montréal Services: réparation gratuite d'appareils électroménagers.
✓ Opération Grand-Ménage 1750, rue Visitation Tél: 523-2772.	No. 19,04	Secteur: Centre-Sud Services: travaux ménagers.
Service-Secours 254 est, rue Ste-Catherine, Suite 23 Tél: 866-9223.	No. 21,87	Secteur: Services: entretien ménager.
✓ Centre Com. de Loisirs Dupéré 8736, De Gros-Bois Tél: 352-9590.	No. 11,14	Secteur: Mercier Services: centre communautaire.
✓ Services Récréatifs et Culturels 3573, rue Cartier Tél: 526-1353.	No. 20,14	Secteur: Grand Montréal Services: 1-projections de films dans ins- titutions spécialisées. 2-excursions motorisées 1 fois par semaine, le tout gratuit.
A.V.E. 8801, rue Notre-Dame Tél: 354-8220	No. 29,36	Secteur: Mercier Services: aide-ménagère à temps partiel.
H.A.C.E. 8801, rue Notre-Dame Tél: 354-8220.	No. 31,66	Secteur: Mercier Services: réaménagement de logement, (lavage, etc...)

- 1 -

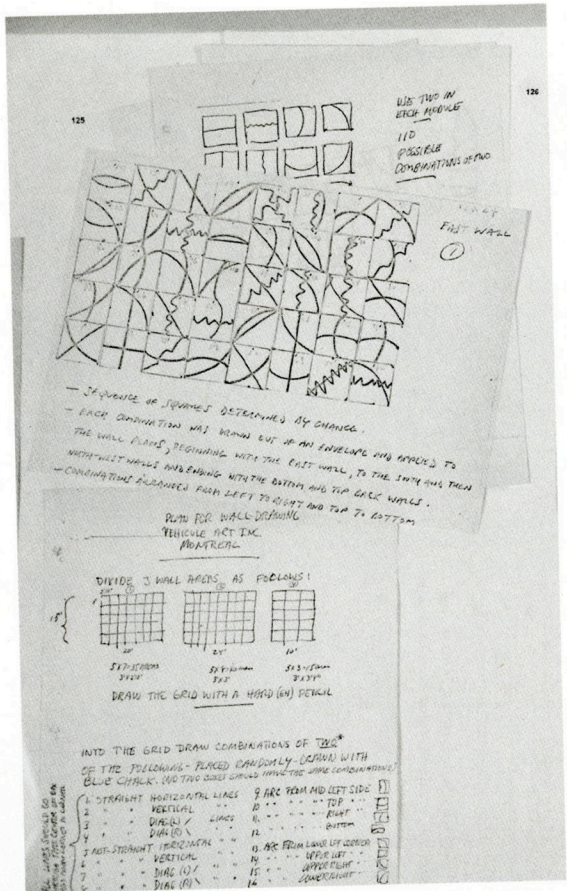
GUIDE À L'INTENTION DES PARRAINS

PROGRAMME DES INITIATIVES LOCALES

1973-74

DIRECTION DE LA CRÉATION D'EMPLOIS

Man-d'œuvre et Immigration Manpower and Immigration



Sol Lewitt

- This project was created + sent to you by Sol Lewitt
- Is this his work or yours?
- You decided where certain boxes go - does that make it yours? Even though Sol Lewitt says he doesn't mind.
- you made mistakes - does that make it your work - or a bad Sol Lewitt
- Are you Sol Lewitt's paint brush - he used you
- Are certain lines - like arcs - the same everywhere? Are who did arcs? Is your arc the same as his arc?
- CLIMBING WALL - IN DOING WORK DID YOU SEE SPACE OF ROOM IN NEW WAY

LEWITT: EDUCATION REPORT

Le "Service Educatif" de Véhicule commençait ses activités au début du mois de mars par la visite de trois écoles secondaires de la région montréalaise: Baron Byng, Montréal High et St. George's School. Ces trois écoles représentent un vaste échantillonnage d'étudiants provenant de divers milieux sociaux: de Westmount à Saint-Henri.

Avant de visiter chacune des écoles, nous entrons en contact avec les professeurs afin de leur expliquer la nature du projet, à savoir: la réalisation de graphismes muraux d'après les instructions de l'artiste américain Sol Lewitt. (Celle oeuvre a été réalisée auparavant sur les murs de la galerie Véhicule. Lewitt n'est pas venu à Montréal, il envoyait ses instructions par la poste. Ses propositions: seize lignes différentes que son combine dans des carrés de 2' x 2' à la galerie) dessinées au crayon de plomb à même le mur. La totalité du mur est donc recouverte de cette immense grille. Chaque module contient deux lignes et aucune répétition n'est permise dans l'agencement de ces lignes. A la galerie, le travail est fait par les membres de Véhicule. Dans les écoles, nous devons apporter certaines modifications afin d'adapter le projet à l'usage de ces lieux. On n'est pas toujours prêt à accepter son mur réalisé sur du papier fixé au mur. On n'est pas toujours prêt à accepter son mur.

Au cours de la visite, l'équipe de Véhicule présente donc les propositions de Lewitt à l'aide de diagrammes. Puis les étudiants réalisent les graphismes sur leurs propres stratégies. Des groupes se forment alors, et se disent ensuite au cours de l'après-midi. Lors de la visite, le graphisme se termine, une discussion s'amorce entre les membres de l'équipe et les étudiants qui ont réalisé le travail. Voici quelques points de discussion abordés:

- objet d'art versus l'idée
- L'artiste en tant que créateur, les étudiants en tant que créateurs
- Mots versus peinture: Pouvez-vous traduire une peinture en mots? Est-ce encore de l'art?
- Expression individuelle versus expression collective.

Remarques des étudiants:
Remarques des étudiants:

- J'étais traumatisé.
- Lorsque j'ai regardé les 'boîtes', elle m'apparaissent trop vides. Une fois l'ensemble réalisé, il y a assez de lignes.
- Je considère que ce travail, que cette oeuvre n'est pas la mienne.
- Je vais le réaliser moi-même à la maison.
- Ceci est plus important au niveau de l'idée, mais l'art est aussi matériel - pas seulement des idées.

Véhicule's education project was launched this March with visits to three high schools: Baron Byng, Montréal High, and St. George's School. These schools represent a wide variety of backgrounds ranging from economically advantaged Westmount to inner-city St. Henri.

Before visiting each of these schools, teachers were contacted and the nature of the project was explained. This project is based upon a work by the American artist, Sol Lewitt, which has been realized at Véhicule Art Center. Lewitt never appeared in the project. He merely sent instructions. A grid was drawn on the walls. This pattern covered the entire wall space - each square was 2 ft. x 2 ft. long at the sides. Included in the instructions was a long drawing section line types. Each square in the grid was to contain two of these types such that no two adjacent squares had the same configuration. The work was completed by members of the gallery. The Lewitt work was modified to fit the rooms and conditions in each school.

School groups participating, drew the grid a day in advance - often this had to be done on paper which was affixed to the walls. On the day of the project, the education team from Véhicule went to the class, presented the Lewitt instructions with diagrams and the students set to work. The strategy was simple.

Groups of students coalesced and dissolved in the process of dividing up labor and filling the squares of the grid. When the drawing was completed, discussion was initiated by the education team. Here are some of the points around which discussion centered:

- object in art versus idea
- artist (Lewitt) as creator versus students as creators
- words versus painting (Can you talk a painting? is it still art?)
- individual expression versus collective expression

How did the students feel?

- was traumatized.
- When I look at the boxes they look too empty but when I saw the whole drawing, there were enough lines.
- It's not really mine.
- It's more important as an idea but art is stuff - not just ideas.

Lewitt says: - Every person has his own line.

EXHIBITION FORM

Organizer of exhibit/performance: Michael Tims of General Idea
 Address: 241. Yonge St., 3rd floor, Toronto, Ontario. Telephone: (416) 368-7787.

Proposed exhibition/performance: (detailed, including photos, slides or other supporting documents)
 THE SEARCH FOR THE SPIRIT OF MISS GENERAL IDEA
 Performance/lecture utilizing slides and voice,
 documenting and unravelling our search for the
 spirits that haunt us from our formation in 1968
 until the present day, projecting into 1984.

Dates of proposed exhibition: (3 week maximum) one evening, January 182-192-252-262...

If the dates indicated are not available, would you agree to another time for the exhibition? probably

Space required: (detailed in terms of wall and floor space needed)
 the usual lecture requirements.

Would you share the space with another exhibitor? yes

Would you have any objections if short events (i.e. poetry readings, musical recitals etc.) were to be scheduled during your exhibition?
 well, that's what this is.

In case of performances, do you plan to charge admission? AND if so, how much?
 gee, I don't know. Would like to make a bit of money.

Please indicate if any special equipment or outstanding circumstances are necessary for the successful presentation of this exhibition. (ex. guest speakers)? Three carousel projectors with manual switches with extension cords. A large white wall or three screens.

If equipment (i.e. tape recorders, speakers etc.) is necessary, where and how do you plan to get it?
 What do you suggest?

Please list other points or important details which are pertinent to this exhibition.
 It's really very simple.

Why are you interested in organizing this particular exhibition/performance? Let people know what we're doing. Help finance a money-raising tour for FILE Magazine.

How do you feel that it will add to or further the concept of Véhicule? As the focus of our work is on artists collaboration and participation across Canada, I imagine the visit should enrich the general flow of information through Véhicule. Fun, too.

If accepted, I will assume full responsibility for organizing and presenting this exhibition/performance.

(signature): date

OTHER COMMENTS: Dear Suzy, Thank you for the form, I do hope it helps. Would very much like to present our show at Véhicule- have done it across Canada and at Columbia U. in NYC. Updating constantly, of course. I'm going on a money-raising tour to Ottawa, Montreal, and New York for FILE and have to support myself as I do it. Hope VEHICULE ART (MONTREAL) INC. - 61 ST. CATHERINE ST. WEST 844-9623/844-7278 to sell a lot of ads to finance the annual directory, a real monster issue. Best wishes, hope Véhicule can help.

AA

January 18th 8:00
 Re: Suzy

March 16, 1974



Suzy Lake,
 Information,
 Véhicule Art (Montreal) Inc.,
 Montreal, P.Q.

Dear Suzy Lake;

We are in the process of setting ourselves up as a non-profit, co-operative gallery with a charter and a charitable tax number. We would appreciate any assistance you could lend us, in the form of a copy of your constitution, or any advice on how to obtain a charter quickly and cheaply. We would be very grateful for any help you could give us.

Yours truly;

Dave Gordon
 Dave Gordon, President,
 Forest City Artists' Association.

POWERHOUSE
 1210 GREENE ST. 2ND FLOOR
 April 1st, 1974

Ms. Suzy Lake
 Véhicule
 61 St. Catherine St. W.
 Montreal, P.Q.

Dear Ms. Lake,

We are presently applying to various organizations, among them the Canada Council, for further funding. Could you help us out by sending us a letter of recommendation and support for the gallery.

This will help our application a great deal. Thank you very much.

yours truly,

Stansje Plantenga
 Stansje Plantenga

/ot

1
Nom, adresse et téléphone de la galerie. Name, address & phone no. of the gallery.
POWERHOUSE GALLERY & STUDIO INC.
3738 ST. DOMINIQUE ST.
MONTREAL P.Q. 844-4101

2
Heures d'ouverture de la galerie: Gallery hours:
automne/hiver (de/à) TUES. - FRI. 12-5 / SAT. 10am-5pm winter (from/to)
été (de/à) CLOSED JULY - AUG. summer (from/to)

3
Quand a-t-elle été fondée? Year established & founded:
MAY 1973
Nom du fondateur? MARGARET GRIFFIN Name of founder.
PAT WALSH STANISLAVE PLANTENGA
ISOBELLE DOULER-GOW LESLIE BUSCH BILLIE JO HERICLE
ROSALIND GUYER-WHITE CLARA GUTSCH ELIZABETH BEATCOLD
Nom du ou des directeur(s) et personnes responsables Name of director(s) & persons responsible for hanging
pour l'accrochage des expositions, ou des personnes shows or running the gallery.
qui dirigent la galerie. TANYA ROSENBERG - DIRECTOR
PAMELA HOAI - PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5
Dimensions de la galerie: Size of the gallery:
nombre de pièces *Small gallery in function of Rooms
murs d'accrochage Reservation: approx 300 sq ft / app. 1400 sq ft. Wall space
surface de plancher (for small works) 1400 sq ft. Floor space

6
Est-ce que votre galerie fait la promotion ou encourage certaines tendances ou mouvements en art. Si oui, lesquels? Does the gallery promote or encourage particular tendencies or movements in art? If yes, which?
Particularly interested in promoting women artists; although we do promote men as well.
Quels sont les artistes de la galerie? Who are the artists of the gallery?
see attached list of active members.

8
Quand et comment les expositions sont-elles choisies ou décidées? When & how are exhibitions chosen or decided?
JURY MEETINGS ARE HELD SOMETIMES A YEAR (NEXT NOV. 9/75) - 3-4 3wk shows are selected by the ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP.

9
Combien d'expositions sont organisées dans une année? Pouvez-vous nous donner des noms d'artistes qui exposaient dans votre galerie l'an dernier? How many exhibitions are organized in one year? Name some of the artists who exhibited last year.
12-13 3 wk exhibitions / 1974
MANUELOE STORM CHERY HOLMES MAY AUBANEL
TANYA ROSENBERG KINA REUSCH PAUL ROBINSON / RUDY SPARKMUL
ANN PEARSON JILL LIVERMORE NON DENIT

10
Quels services offrez-vous aux artistes qui exposent dans votre galerie? Accrochage, coûts des invitations, du vernissage, transport des oeuvres, catalogue, diffusion à l'extérieur du Québec. What services do you offer to the artists that exhibit in your gallery? ie. Hanging, invitations, costs of vernissage, transportation of works, catalogue, contacts outside of Quebec.
HANGING; POSTAGE FOR VERNISSAGE INVITATIONS; PUBLICITY CONTACTS (IN MTL & OUTSIDE).

11
Avez-vous une politique spéciale pour les mois d'été? What is the gallery's policy for exhibitions in the summer months?
closed

12
Votre galerie a-t-elle d'autres activités? éditions de livres d'art, cours, encadrements, animation? Other associated activities: art editions, courses, framing, animation?
DRAWING SESSIONS: MON + WED 7:30-10:00 (12:00 fee) model
POETRY READINGS (TO BE SCHEDULED).
DANCES / CRAFT SALES / RUMMAGE SALES (periodically)

13
Votre galerie possède-t-elle de la documentation sur les artistes (curriculum vitae, diapositives, monographies, articles de journaux) que le public peut consulter? Does the gallery carry files on its artists (curriculum vitae, slides, monographs, reviews, etc.) that are available for consultation?
YES.

1
Nom, adresse et téléphone de la galerie. Name, address & phone no. of the gallery.
Galerie UQAM
3450 Saint Urbain
876-5494

2
Heures d'ouverture de la galerie: Gallery hours:
automne/hiver (de/à) 12AM à 8PM winter (from/to)
été (de/à) NIL summer (from/to)

3
Quand a-t-elle été fondée? Year established & founded:
1969
Nom du fondateur? LEON FRANSTON Name of founder.

4
Nom du ou des directeur(s) et personnes responsables pour l'accrochage des expositions, ou des personnes qui dirigent la galerie. Name of director(s) & persons responsible for hanging shows or running the gallery.
UMBERTO BRUNI
LUC MONETTE

5
Dimensions de la galerie: Size of the gallery:
nombre de pièces 1 pièce Rooms
murs d'accrochage 22' x 8' - 40' x 8' - 18' x 8' Wall space
surface de plancher 25' x 42' Floor space

6
Est-ce que votre galerie fait la promotion ou encourage certaines tendances ou mouvements en art. Si oui, lesquels? Does the gallery promote or encourage particular tendencies or movements in art? If yes, which?
EXPOSITIONS DIDACTIQUES

7
Quels sont les artistes de la galerie? Who are the artists of the gallery?
AUCUN

8
Quand et comment les expositions sont-elles choisies ou décidées? When & how are exhibitions chosen or decided?
COMITE DE TRAVAIL
OUVENS A L'AVANCE

9
Combien d'expositions sont organisées dans une année? Pouvez-vous nous donner des noms d'artistes qui exposaient dans votre galerie l'an dernier? How many exhibitions are organized in one year? Name some of the artists who exhibited last year.
7 à 10 expo.
PAS D'ARTISTE INDIVIDUELS

10
Quels services offrez-vous aux artistes qui exposent dans votre galerie? Accrochage, coûts des invitations, du vernissage, transport des oeuvres, catalogue, diffusion à l'extérieur du Québec. What services do you offer to the artists that exhibit in your gallery? ie. Hanging, invitations, costs of vernissage, transportation of works, catalogue, contacts outside of Quebec.
ACCROCHAGE - MONTAGE INVITATIONS
DIFFUSION RESEAU UQ.

11
Avez-vous une politique spéciale pour les mois d'été? What is the gallery's policy for exhibitions in the summer months?
AUCUNE

12
Votre galerie a-t-elle d'autres activités? éditions de livres d'art, cours, encadrements, animation? Other associated activities: art editions, courses, framing, animation?
ANIMATION PAR INTEGRATION PROGRESSIVE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT

13
Votre galerie possède-t-elle de la documentation sur les artistes (curriculum vitae, diapositives, monographies, articles de journaux) que le public peut consulter? Does the gallery carry files on its artists (curriculum vitae, slides, monographs, reviews, etc.) that are available for consultation?
NON.

- 01 Application to the Local Initiatives Program / General Idea, November 1971, 22 p. Series 5 "Art Metropole: Grants," box 2 of 4, file entitled: "L.I.P. FILE - 1971-1972," Art Metropole fonds, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 02 Letter of Acknowledgement for the Local Initiatives Program project proposal no. 311-178 [General Idea] addressed to Mr. George [sic] Saia / Manpower and Immigration: Canada Works, November 22, 1971, [1 p.]. Series 5 "Art Metropole: Grants," box 2 of 4, file entitled: "L.I.P. FILE - 1971-1972," Art Metropole fonds.
- 03 "FILE Magazine" (vol. 1, no. 1, 15 April 1972) / Toronto: General Idea, 32 pp. Art Metropole collection. Reproduced: Image Bank address list [p. 30] and "Borderline Research" project by General Idea [p. 31] with the following instructions: "Locate and draw from memory the Canadian/American border. Accumulative results will be published in a future issue of FILE."
- 04 "FILE Magazine" (vol. 1, no. 2&3, May/June 1972) / Toronto: General Idea, 64 pp. Art Metropole collection. Reproduced: results of the request for the "Borderline Research" project [p. 1]; cover: form filled by Clive Robertson of W.O.R.K.S. and sent back to General Idea [pp. 63-64]. This form can be located in the "W.O.R.K.S." file, Series 8 "Art Metropole: Mail Art, Correspondence and Ephemera Material," box 4 of 4, Art Metropole fonds.
- 05 Canada Council grant application / Art_Official [General Idea], November 1972, [9 pp.]. Series 5 "Art Metropole: Grants," box 2 of 4, file entitled: "FILE grants applications (old): Canada Council - 1971-1972," Art Metropole fonds.
- 06 Ontario Arts Council grant application form for periodicals / filled by Michael Tims, May 16, 1973, [1 p.]. Series 5 "Art Metropole: Grants," box 2 of 4, file entitled: "FILE grants applications (old)," Art Metropole fonds.
- 07 "Minutes of First Annual Board Meeting of Art_Official Inc., 241 Yonge Street, Toronto, Canada" [present at the meeting: Jorge Saia (president), Ronald Gabe (vice-president), AA Bronson (secretary-treasurer), Granada Gazelle and Robert Arthrob] / General Idea, November 25th, 1973, [12 pp.]. Series 1 "Art Metropole: Exhibitions and Projects," box: 3 of 3 [oversized items], Art Metropole fonds.

- 08 Ontario Arts Council Application for the 1974-1976 period / General Idea, 1974, [11 pp.]. Series 5 "Art Metropole: Grants," box 2 of 4, file entitled: "Ontario Arts Council (1974-1976)," Art Metropole fonds.
- 09 "Notebook (1973-1974)" / AA Bronson, c. 1973, n. pag. "AA Bronson notebooks" series, box 47, General Idea fonds, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 10 "The Contract Record," vol. 25, no. 30 (July 1911), n. pag. "Projects" series 1974-1976, box 3A, file entitled: "Art Metropole (various), 1974," General Idea fonds. The article entitled "new headquarters" describes the "Art Metropole Ltd building" project that would house an art supply store.
- 11 "Art Metropole catalogue No. 1 'Canada'" / General Idea, 1974, n. pag. "Projects" series 1974-1976, box 3A, file entitled: "Art Metropole (various), 1974," General Idea fonds.
- 12 Letter to J. Hunter, Deputy Librarian, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa / Robert Handforth [manager, Art Metropole], October 28, 1974, [1 p.]. Art Metropole documentary file, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 13 241 Yonge street, Toronto [Art Metropole] / photographer unknown, c. 1974. Box 3A, "Projects" series 1974-1976, file entitled: "Art Metropole (various), 1974," General Idea fonds, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 14 Letter to Mr. Peanut [Vincent Trasov] / AA Bronson, October 31, 1974, [2 pp.]. Box C6, accession number 20.05, Morris/Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 15 "FILE Subscription Statistics - GLAMOUR ISSUE" / General Idea, Fall 1975, [1 p.]. Series 5 "Art Metropole: Grants," box 2 of 4, file entitled: "FILE grants applications (old)," Art Metropole fonds, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 16 Account book / Felix Partz, 1975, n. pag. "Felix Partz Notebooks" series box 48, General Idea fonds, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa.
- 17 Letter to Art_Official / Time Life Corporation [redesigned by General Idea], undated [c. 1976], [1 p.]. Box C6, accession number 20.05, Morris/Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM APPLICATION
GENERAL IDEA, TORONTO
November, 1971

Purpose of the project - Objectifs de l'initiative:

The purpose of this project this to organize, design and publish a magazine by artists for artists with a specific intent of providing an internal voice within the art community and a means of communicating and integrating developments within the arts community.

Main activities which will be undertaken to achieve these purposes - Principales activités qui seront entreprises pour atteindre ces objectifs:

This project will provide employment for a total of 14. All will be directly connected with the production, and distribution of the art magazine.

Magazine will be produced in Toronto but circulated across the country.

Suitable workers to fill in the specialized jobs are known to the group, are all unemployed at present. Others will be hired through Canada Manpower Centre.

As programme evolves, income will be derived from the sale of the magazine and from advertisers.

Funds will be handled through the Royal Bank of Canada - King and Yonge Streets, Toronto.

[...]

4. DESCRIBE WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN, HOW THE PROJECT IS TO BE MANAGED AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY BETTERMENT.

(Describe the work to be undertaken..)
We are proposing the establishment of a monthly magazine specifically designed to act as a Canadian internal art scene "house organ" and to provide the total diversity of the Canadian art community with a means of viewing itself and discovering, expressing, and answering its own needs.

Implicit within the project is the expectation that the publication will create a new awareness of projects or potential projects and will precipitate further employment, either within or without the structure of the magazine, through the enactment of these projects. Video banks and exchange systems, artist's co-operatives and group workshops, and groups concerned with the integration of the artist's talent into the general commu-

nity are obvious possibilities.

The work to be undertaken, then, is the organization, design, and production of a magazine designed by artists for artists with the specific intent of providing an internal voice within the art community, and a means of communicating and instigating realization of possible developments within that community.

A variety of levels of occupation are involved, including secretarial, advertising and publicity, distribution, design, layout, printing, editorial, functions, writing, and research.

(...how the project is to be managed...)

This project has been organized and will be produced by General Idea, a group of Toronto artists specifically concerned with the establishment and utilization of information systems rooted in the art community and referring or relating to aspects of the community at large. A prime concern is the formation of simple information structures within which the individual artist can participate easily and meaningfully.

Production of the magazine will be managed by an editorial/production staff of four General Idea members (currently unemployed). They would handle all preliminary researches and policy-setting (see below), advertising and publicity, distribution, policy-making, design decisions, and actual lay-out and paste-up of the magazine.

A secretary and a book-keeper will be hired through Canada Manpower to organize and keep all necessary records and files, and to handle all correspondence, typing and other secretarial duties.

In addition to the above staff of five, contributors to the magazine from across Canada will be involved, some on a regular basis, but usually according to thematic and content considerations of the issue in progress. A total of eight contributors per issue will be required, to be paid on the basis of one week's work per contributor.

[p. 2]

Seven weeks will be spent on preliminary organization and research, involving editorial policies, management considerations, establishment of suitable filing and correspondence systems, advertisement, promotion, and preliminary contact with the art community across Canada. Work will begin on February first towards the first issue, tentatively to be released on March first. Another issue will follow on the first of each month thereafter.

The magazine will be published in an edition of three thousand, 10" x 14", thirty-two pages, and is seen as available space in which artists can demonstrate their concerns. (This is not seen as a listing of art objects for sale, but rather as an exposure of researches, ongoing projects, technical problems, and so on). The first issue will be distributed free of charge to galleries, art schools, artists, and related persons across the country. Following issues will be sold at a minimal price in bookstores and galleries across Canada. Five hundred free copies will be distributed to artists of each and every issues.

Preliminary financing will be provided almost entirely by the Local Initiatives Program, including all wages until the end of May and other expenses up to but not including printing of the second issue of the magazine. Revenues from sales and advertising are expected to cover the costs of production from there on, and will hopefully allow the continuation of the project and all established employment after completion of the Local Initiatives Program. We wish to emphasize that this is a non-profit project. The magazine will be of necessity esoteric and of little commercial interest. All, if any, profits, will be fed back into the publication for either expansion purposes or for the establishment of alternate programmes extending the purpose of the magazine.

Actual content of the magazine will be provided by the art community itself. Correspondance with artists and groups of artists across Canada is presently in progress and has been an ongoing concern for two years. Such obvious high density contact points as Intermedia and Image Bank in Vancouver, the Screen Shop in Winnipeg, A Space in Toronto, and the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design in Halifax will provide an initial network from which the remainder of the community may be contacted. Production of the magazine will become a matter of delegating authority on a transcanada basis to provide a magazine that is as consistent in its representation of the Canadian art community as it is inconsistent in its range of styles, viewpoints, and methods.

(...and its contribution to the community betterment.)

The Canadian art community presently corresponds to many communities in that it consists of a large number of individuals working at separate but overlapping concerns in a manner usually isolative and often jealously protective. There is little community intercommunication or commitment, and

many possible working relationships lie dormant through a total ignorance of ongoing researches, projects and community needs.

We are proposing the establishment of an art community monthly magazine to act as a medium for artists to communicate to artists their ongoing researches, projects, problems, and concerns. Basically the magazine would act as free space within which the artist might lay out his concerns in his own manner. The magazine, then, provides:

An outlet for artists to present actual documentation

[p. 3]

of work and concerns in progress. This is not seen in term of explication of art concerns to the public (artscanada magazine already serves this purpose) but rather as the initial phase in the establishment of communication between artists involved in overlapping or reinforcing researches and projects.

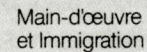
An outlet for a continuing correspondence, of a visual or written nature, between artists or groups of artists and of interest to the art community.

A means of distributing current information regarding artists individuals and group needs. This might be as mundane as a request for studio space or as abstract as a request for information or images relating to a certain concern. News items and information relating to festivals and competitions would be provided.

A means of financing particular artists to carry out particular projects within the format of the magazine. Projects might be created for the magazine that would otherwise never happen. It is conceivable and expectable that these might eventually expand to become separate concerns providing additional sources of employment (artists co-operatives, video exchange banks, and so on).

Although such groups as Intermedia and Image Bank in Vancouver and A Space in Toronto are acting as a means of focusing local art communities, there has been little attempt to establish any community awareness elsewhere to our knowledge, let alone to establish the transcanada network as an operating structure. It is this problem we propose to investigate.

[...]



Ça
marche

Programme des
Initiatives Locales

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence LIP-311178

Local Initiatives Program
P.O. Box 159
Toronto 111, Ontario
November 22, 1971

Nous vous remercions de votre demande de participation au Programme des initiatives locales. Nous vous prions de croire qu'elle sera étudiée avec le plus grand soin et que nous vous ferons connaître le plus tôt possible notre décision.

L'autorité d'approuver ou de rejeter les demandes ne relève pas du Centre de Main-d'oeuvre du Canada de votre localité, mais bien du bureau de l'administration centrale ou des Bureaux régionaux de notre Ministère. C'est donc l'un d'entre eux qui vous communiquera la décision aussitôt qu'elle sera prise.

Dans toute correspondance future,
veuillez rappeler les références suivantes:

Project Title
Titre de l'initiative

General Idea

Veuillez agréer l'expression de nos
sentiments distingués.

Directeur général régional

M. & I. 1035 (11-71)

03

INMATION. The book is written in a clear, accessible style, and the authors provide a wealth of information on the current state of the industry. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in the future of the industry.

The Editor

When the Inputrek battalions razed the FILES, Art City submitted to the feminine turtles. The merry towers of the TOP TEN elite were the first to fall (see page 21) but the rest was quick to follow. In the world of art (page 18), entertainment (page 25), and fashion (page 32), not to mention ecology (page 30) and leading research (page 31), the women came out on top in this Fatso Member lute of your FILES and ours.

02

PAGE 148

04.01

PAGE 149

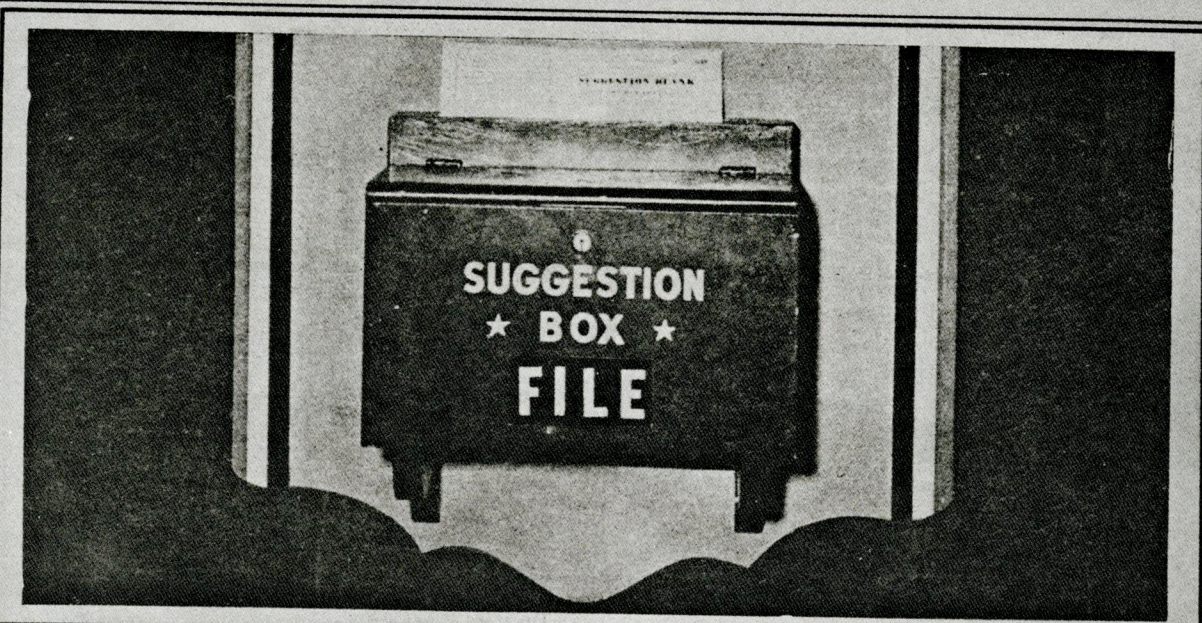
GENERAL IDEA/ART METROPOLE

FILE



MAY JUNE , 1972

04.02



FILE is currently compiling lists of artists and craftsmen with skills applicable to the building and/or architectural industries. Please list below artists you know of with a brief description of their skills. Photos and other images are always appreciated. From hand-carved door-knobs to cut-glass bidets. Work with recycled materials is of particular interest.

Please add my request to the Image Bank Artists' Request List in your Fall Fun Issue of FILE. My request is:

CALL THE ARTIST
LARGE or small JOBS
PHONE (403) 269-7119

CALL THE POET
LARGE or small JOBS
PHONE (403) 269-7119

CALL THE COMPOSER
LARGE or small JOBS
PHONE (403) 269-7119

CALL THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
LARGE or small JOBS RECIPIENT
PHONE (403) 269-7119

Please add the following omissions to your artists' directory: (see page 29, FILE 1, and page 53, this issue, for current listings.)

we ourselves roughly know something

W.O.R.K.S.
BOX 1753
MAIN P.O.
T2P 2L8
CALGARY
ALTA., CANADA

CLIVE & SU ROBERTSON
PAUL WOODROW

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....

PROVINCE.....

☒ YES, I would like to receive the fall issue of FILE magazine.

☐ NO, I would not like to receive the fall issue of FILE magazine.

FILE invites you to participate in the ongoing workings of the Eternal Network. Please fill in both sides of this Reader's Response Page and return to FILE, 87 Yonge St., Toronto 1, Ontario. Don't forget to include your name(s) and address in the handy address form below.

64 N.B. - often the Eternal Network gets mainly involved in Calgary - even Robert Fillion becomes tired of writing, however Dick Higgins + Ken Friedman + Klaus Gern and a very few others - plus ourselves will assist.

04.03

THE REASON FOR ART_OFFICIAL

The Canadian Art Community

The Canadian art scene in particular and the cultural scene in general are only now beginning to gather their individual strengths. In a linear country lying close to the American border, communication north and south has often been tantalizingly easier and more prestigious than that east and west.

While the Vancouver art community is in full and responsive communication with California, and the Halifax community appears often predetermined by New York standards, communication between Halifax and Vancouver has been limited and notably unsuccessful. Both, however, support interesting art communities involved in vital lines of research. Such a situation appears to be typical in Canada, whether the distance be three thousand miles or three hundred.

A notable exception, of course, is the extensive interchange within the last years between the Coach House Press and General Idea in Toronto, and Image Bank, the New Era Social Club, and related artists in Vancouver. This interchange has resulted in a variety of videotapes, publications, performances and other collaborations important for their sense of a developing Canadian sensibility and an open network of art activity.

Art publishing in Canada

Like many artists across Canada and elsewhere, General Idea is becomingly increasingly aware of photo-offset printing as a means of effectively representing and distributing the ideas we deal in. Like many artists across Canada, we have repeatedly discovered the difficulty, and in fact the impossibility, of publishing in Canada, in either periodical or book form, due to (a) the severe dearth of art periodicals being produced in Canada and (b) the shortage of Canadian publishing houses interested in publishing often esoteric work by Canadian artists.

[p. 2]

It is worth noting that the United States produces over two hundred and fifty art publications, compared to a mere dozen in Canada. American publications cover every

aspect of an extensive field, from investment and marketing advice to art criticism and explication. They catalogue and describe acquisitions and collections, recent sales and prices, new developments in a variety of directions. They originate from museums, schools, universities, the government and from artists themselves. All of the major art journals on the Canadian stands today are written and produced in the United States or are based on American modes, methods and standards. They are primarily concerned with the output of American artists.

In contrast, Canada's dozen art publications are usually gallery bulletins or broadsheets, mailed to a list of members and involving primarily information on current or upcoming shows.

Five magazines of a more general nature exist in Canada. One of these, *Vie des Arts*, is French. *Artscanada* and *Art Magazine* are English-speaking explication of recognized art for the benefit of the general public. They are used as a convenient supplement to all those thick glossy American mags, which have so much more to say. *FILE MAGAZINE* and *Beaux Arts* (from Montreal) are the sole exceptions, the only publications produced by artists for artists and dealing with ongoing, not necessarily recognized, investigations.

In other words, the Canadian art periodical scene is only beginning to develop. *FILE* and *Beaux Arts* are both in early stages and require further development if they are to effectively act as a mean of distributing current art information between artists across Canada.

As for the books, it's the Group of Seven or nothing. The only publishing house concerned with contemporary Canadian art is the Coach House Press, and they remain devoted largely to the publication of the underground literary scene. The backlog of completed art work in book format remaining unpublished is astounding. Either facilities have to be created within Canada or the artists will have to make their way to the art publishing houses of New York, Amsterdam and Germany, which already form the backbone of much of the new art being done abroad and below.

[p. 3]

Our response to an artless situation

In November of 1971, General Idea, realizing the difficulty and the importance of artist's collaboration and communication in Canada, and the key importance of the printed media, applied to the Department of Manpower and Immigration Local Initiatives Project

for funding to publish *FILE MAGAZINE* under *Art_Official* for the express purpose of:

- establishing alternate lines of communication within the art community for the formulation and exchange of ideas and images
- facilitating contact and interchange between educational and other institutions and the main body of Canadian artists.
- supporting and reinforcing the investigation of projects developing market potential and alternate means of employment within the art community, both in terms of immediate and future possibilities.

Art_Official subsequently published three issues of *FILE MAGAZINE* and distributed them to artists, art schools, artist's collectives, and individuals with related interests across Canada and around the world. This preliminary work remains unique as the only publication in Canada (and one of the few in the world) produced by artists for artists, providing evidence of work in progress, and facilitating contact and exchange between artists in Canada and elsewhere.

FILE, however, is no more than an initial probe. Its effectiveness is limited to instant art-scene reportage centering on a certain genre. It cannot in itself fill in the gaps and provide a continuing and detailed report of art concerns in Canada. In other words, *FILE* supplies clues, but there still remains to be established a means of publishing limited edition book-format art in Canada. *Intermedia Press* is simply too local, while the Coach House has other (related) obligations. *ART_OFFICIAL* proposes to extend its already established distribution, production, and communication systems into a means whereby much of this work may be dealt with and published.

[...]

[p. 6]

III: ART-OFFICIAL & THE ARTFUL FUTURE

Over the coming year, *ART_OFFICIAL* plans the following activity:

1. The continued publication of *FILE MAGAZINE* will remain the central core to *ART_OFFICIAL* activity. Four times yearly *FILE MAGAZINE* will continue to act as a means of establishing contact with artists and conducting exploratory probes into the nature of their work and its development. *FILE MAGAZINE* will continue to act as a means of facilitating contact between artists in Canada and as a means of diminishing the time gap in art-

ist's communications. *FILE MAGAZINE* will publish evidence of work in progress with an increased emphasis on lifestyle, correspondence, and mythological considerations.

2. *ART_OFFICIAL* will publish and distribute a number of limited edition art publications over the coming year. Three of these are now in progress, and represent important contributions to the development of correspondence and mythological art in Canada. Ron Gabe's "DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD" is an analogical study of the death of art, the fall from grace, and the riddle of Humpty Dumpty in kabalistic format. General Idea's "GLAMOUR" contains documentation and explication of the Miss General Idea Pageants and the nature of the SPLIT between nature and culture. The third book remains untitled, a collaborative effort involving transcriptions of dialogues within the correspondence art network. In addition to these, *ART_OFFICIAL* is devising a series of limited edition books reproducing correspondence art of various Canadian artists in detail.

3. *ART_OFFICIAL* will continue its work as an information clearing house for Canadian art and artists, and its attempts to facilitate national and international collaboration between artists.

Having begun, then, an initial description of certain tendencies in contemporary Canadian art, *ART_OFFICIAL* will shift its emphasis in the coming year from initial probing to providing a detailed infill on ongoing art activity, and will provide a means whereby Canadian artists may publish evidence of completed and/or ongoing researches. At the same time *ART_OFFICIAL* hopes to continue its services as an information centre and research organization.

Certainly if the development of artists collaboration and exchange achieved in the past year is to reach fruition, it is imperative at this time that *ART_OFFICIAL*'s (or similar) services to the art community continue and widen.

[...]

Arts Division		Application for Grant — Periodicals		Sheet 1	
Return 1 completed copy to: The Ontario Arts Council 151 Bloor St. W. Toronto M5S 1T6				Grant Requested \$ 19,760 Date of Application May 16, 1973 March 29, 1973	
Application submitted by (Name and Address) Michael W. Tims, 87 Yonge St., 3rd floor, Toronto M5C 1S8				Category: <input type="checkbox"/> First Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Renewal	
Telephone 368-7787 Area code 416 Number		Position / Title co-editor Editorial Board		Publisher ART-OFFICIAL INC. Editor see editorial board Printer Newsweb Offset/ Coach House Press (special inserts)	
Publisher ART-OFFICIAL INC.		Editor see editorial board		Ron Gabe Michael Tims Jorge Sala	
Publication and Circulation Data					
Past Years			Data		
19	19	19 72	19 73		
		4	Number of times published in the year		
		98	Languages of publication (specify) —		
		2	— English		
		25	— French		
		n.a.	Circulation—Number sold in bookstores		
		2900	—Other paid circulation		
		3000	—Free circulation		
			—Total circulation		
		80	National circulation (% of total circulation)		
		20	International circulation (% of total circulation)		
		97	Authorship—Canadian proportion		
		3	—International proportion		
		n.a.	Articles —Number submitted per year		
		n.a.	—Number published per year		
		30	Proportion of Contents devoted to— xxxx correspondence		
		30	— xxxxxxx photo stories		
		3	— xxxxxx memoirs		
		10	—essays		
		15	— xxxxxxxxxxxxxx directories		
		5	— excerpts from novels		
			—reviews		
		36	Number of pages		
		n.a.	Subscription rates—1 year		
		n.a.	—2 year		
			—Other (specify)		
		40%	Agent's Commission		
If this publication is to be issued by or for an Institution or Department of an institution, provide: Name of Institution: _____ Department: _____					
Attached: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sheet 2 of this application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 copies of current issue <input type="checkbox"/> 1 earlier issue					
Signature of Applicant <i>Michael W. Tims</i>					

AA BRONSON
Secretary-Treasurer

1. The soup was served by Granada Gazelle.
2. Jorge served the wine. The Spirit spilled a little. We toast the Spirit.
3. The grey cup was discussed.
4. AA served steak (sirloin). AA had the biggest piece, Granada said it was the best meal he ever cooked.
5. G.G. moves we talk about new year's party.
6. Felix seconds it.
7. AA suggests New Year's Eve party as opening of Metropole. Corrected by Felix.
8. Robert suggests a Spirit of '84 party.
9. Jorge (President) suggests a comet cometh party.
10. GG: Whenever I like boys I feel like a faggot.
11. Robert thinks its all semantic.
12. Jorge wore gold cigar wrappers on his fingers as the Spirit of Miss M General Idea.
13. G.G. moves keep same executive.
14. AA seconds it.
15. The same.
16. membership. GG suggests only Canadians, no blacks.
17. Felix suggests we forget about membership til we have something to offer.
18. Granada made a member.
19. General Idea and Art Metropole absorbed. Register Art Metropole!
- 20.
21. Should FILE end?
22. GG says its too early.
23. Ron says FILE can't end until there's something to replace it.
24. Ron suggests ROM take over Art Metropole for the summer.
25. Art Metropole:
 - distribution
 - archives
 - publication of archives
 - mailings (publications in their own rights)
26. GG reads the new editorial.

[...]

Name of organization: ART METROPOLE

Date: April 30, 1974

9. Complete this section only if you are a new applicant, or if information differs from your last application.

a) Describe briefly your organization's principal activities.

Art Metropole will be a permanent storage and display area for a wide but selective collection of artifacts and evidence from the growing number of artists working within non-traditional forms; examples of works in these fringe territories of contemporary art include certain publications, periodicals and printed matter; slides, photographs and art-work considered as documents or as thematic collections of images; certain performances and events and their related documentation; and correspondence and mail art, as these constitute collaboration and exchange among artists. It is intended to hold and expand this archive for the next ten years-until 1984, which is widely regarded by the artists described as a mythological "goal" year, at which time the collection will be lodged permanently in a specified location.

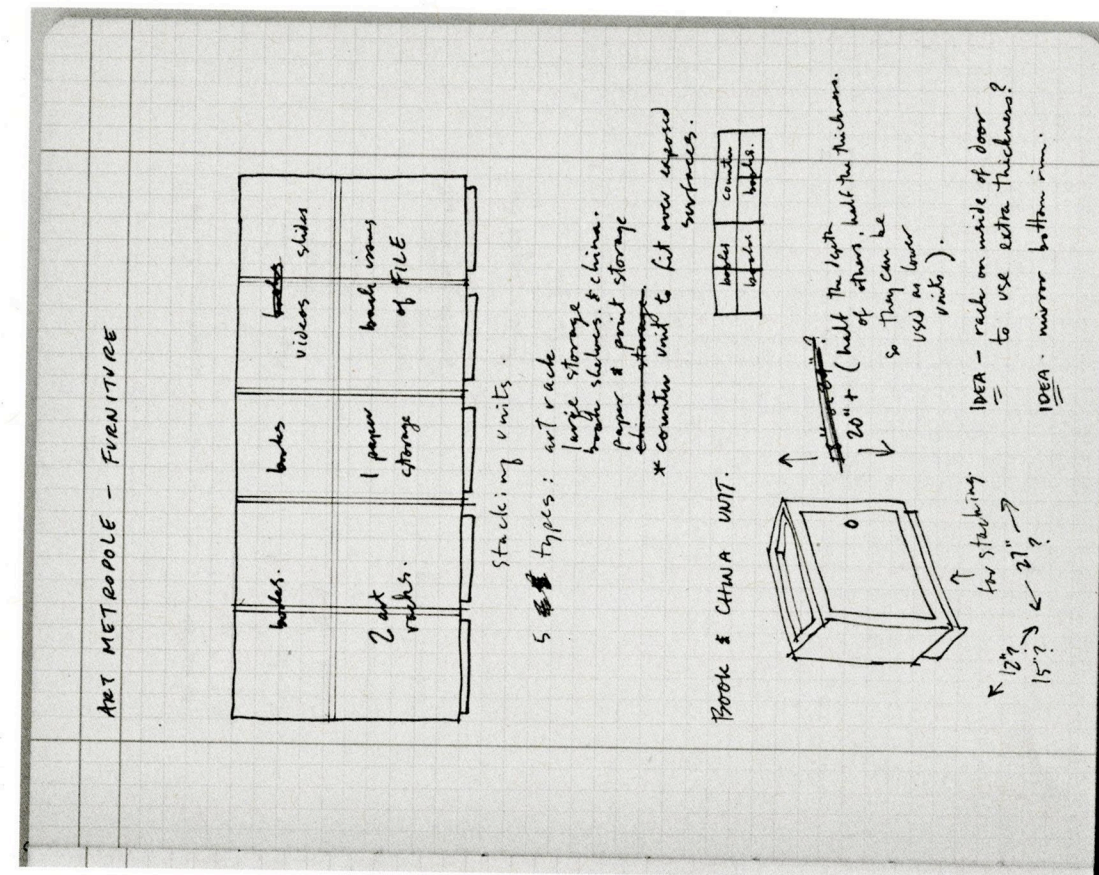
Art Metropole has four main functions: 1) to continue collecting and/or recording a wide selection of works and artifacts by these artists and their collaborators; 2) to maintain this collection in a permanent, classified archive/library; 3) to make this collection available to artists, educational institutions, and the public through continuing displays from the archive on view at Art Metropole, and through responses to written requests for selected materials, either for loan or for duplicate copies; and 4) to further diffuse selections from the collection through such means as publication, lectures and traveling displays.

Art Metropole's location is in a third-floor studio space of 750 square feet on Yonge Street in the centre of downtown Toronto; this location is readily available to local artists (a majority of whom work or live in the downtown area), the viewing public and visitors to the city.

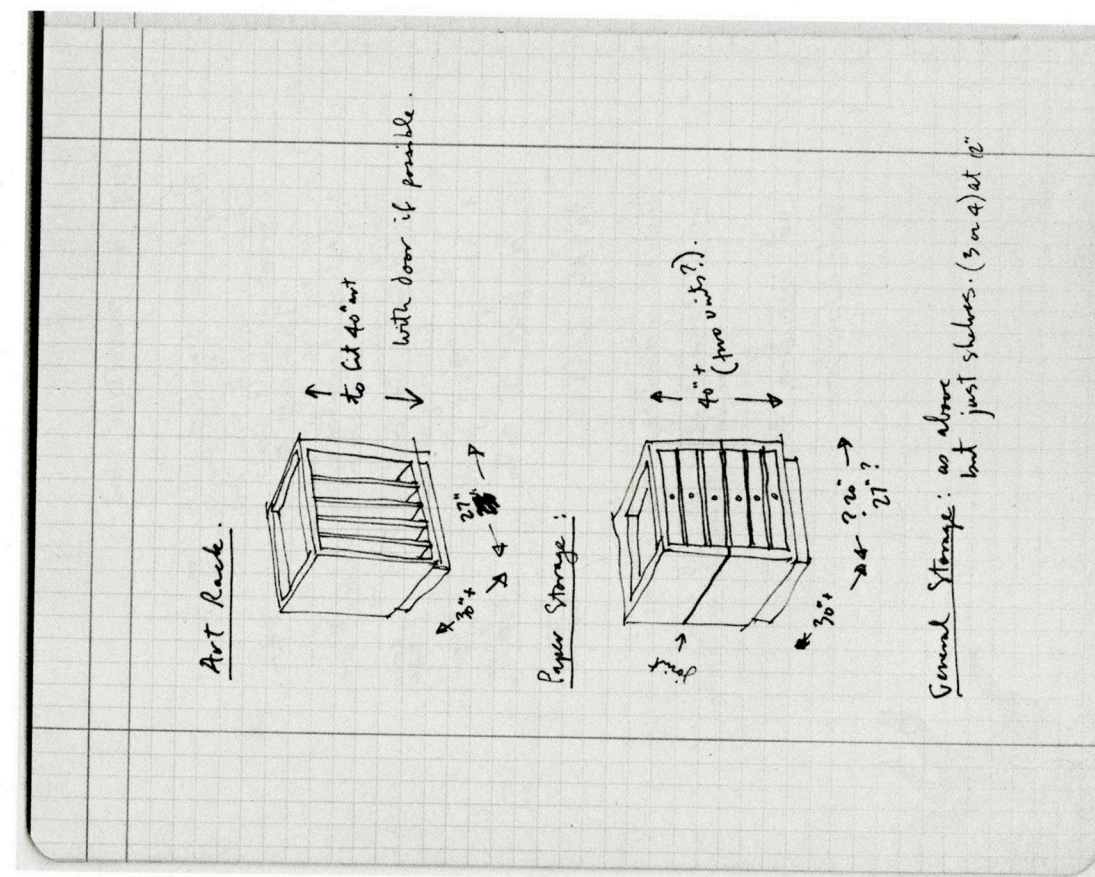
[...]

Do you undertake co-operative programs with organizations in your community, and if so, how and with whom?

Co-operative programming with the Canadian Writers Foundation, Coach House Press, A Space, Chase Press (all of Toronto), and Image Bank (Vancouver), Vehicule (Montreal) and W.O.R.K.S. (Calgary) are all foreseen, although no specific plans are yet made. As the nature of our archive concerns collaboration and cooperation between artists, cooperative programmes will necessarily constitute a major part of our activities. Of course we will be archiving material generated by all these centres.



09.01



09.02

ART METROPOLE BUILDING 241 YONGE STREET TORONTO CANADA M5B 1N8 (416) 368-7787

ART METROPOLE

Catalogue No. 1
CANADA

ARTISTS PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS

Contract Record
Vol. 35
#30

THE CONTRACT RECORD

done in large sewer work in Paris, building them completely first, then the method of concrete-sealed tubes for river, analogous to the first step in the construction of a tunnel. The whole problem is one of the greatest use of a concrete lined tube made rigid with a reinforced concrete girder of rather unusual dimensions.

New Headquarters

The accompanying illustration is a front elevation of a new Toronto, owned and to be occupied by the Art Metropole, Limited. The structure will be of brick and steel construction, handsomely faced with stone, with an available floor area of 11,000 sq. ft. The work is being done by the Blue-print department of the City of Toronto, are the architects. Excavation work is well

under way and it is expected that the entire building will be ready for occupancy early in October. The structure will cost in the neighborhood of \$35,000.

Quieter Homes

A plan that is being worked out successfully in several of the municipalities in the Greater Toronto area is no longer a street but a wide concrete sidewalk with broad stretches of lawns that extend back to the buildings. Delivery trucks can drive up to the curb and load and unload without clean, alleys; while automobiles can make use of intersecting streets so that they can stop within a few rods of any house in the block.

There are many advantages in this plan for residential areas. The appearance of such a place for homes, without dirt or street refuse, being the first consideration. It is much quieter and more secluded, as there are no teams or drays clearing from the streets. Also, it is much more economical, as the owner who laid out the track did not have to allow so much area for street use; there is no expense to the municipality for the maintenance of the sidewalks, which property owner's share of expense for the central sidewalk would be about equal to his assessment for a cement walk on an ordinary street. Of course, the business streets of these towns are laid out in the customary design.

Practical Limits of Concrete Mill Building

In the course of the discussion on the comparative cost of mill building at the recent annual convention of the National Association of Cement Users, Harry Wason of the Art Metropole, Ltd., made a valuable contribution to the point that there is a sharply defined limit of load which determines whether concrete or mill construction is the most economical type. An example was cited of a factory building, the first consideration was the cost of the concrete. The floors were designed to carry 800 lb. per sq. ft. on 24 ft. spans and it was found that three conditions, reinforced concrete was by far the cheapest material, much cheaper than the limit is 200 lb. per sq. ft. for lighter loads, mill construction is generally cheaper. For heavier loads reinforced concrete is cheaper in first cost.

The electrical resistance of plain concrete is the subject of a report of a German commission. The report contains the details of the methods of testing, the quality of the mixtures and determinations on electrical resistance, and the effect of salt water and artificially increased moisture. The principal conclusions of these tests made on mortar blocks 8 x 8 x 36 ins. are as follows:

For a current above 0.1 amp., an increase in current brought about a reduction in resistance. The temperature increased.

The decrease in resistance for the same increase in temperature is the same in gravel concrete as in broken stone concrete but the former has the greater decrease.

Resistance increased with drying and was greater in fresh air than in salt water.

Resistance increases as the amount of mixing water or the included water decreases.



C50-A

ART METROPOLE

ART METROPOLE BUILDING 241 YONGE STREET TORONTO CANADA M5B 1N8 (416) 368-7787

OCTOBER 28
1974

J. HUNTER, DEPUTY LIBRARIAN
NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA
OTTAWA ONTARIO

DEAR J. HUNTER:

THANKS FOR YOUR CARD, IT'S THE FIRST OFFICIAL LETTER OF ENQUIRY WE'VE RECEIVED, BUT THAT'S NOT SURPRISING SINCE TODAY IS OUR FIRST FULL DAY OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

THERE REALLY ISN'T THAT MUCH MORE INFORMATION WE CAN GIVE YOU ABOUT ART METROPOLE. ART-OFFICIAL IS A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION FORMED BY GENERAL IDEA TO PROMOTE COLLABORATION AND EXCHANGE AMONG ARTISTS. ONE OF ITS BRANCHES IS FILE MEGAZINE; ANOTHER IS ART METROPOLE, WHICH IS INTENDED TO FUNCTION AS AN AGENCY FOR ARTISTS WHOSE WORK IS PRIMARILY PRINTED MATTER, PHOTOGRAPHS, OR VIDEO. THE CATALOG, WHICH WILL APPEAR QUARTERLY, ADVERTISES WORKS AVAILABLE THROUGH OUR DISTRIBUTION SERVICE. THE PROJECT WAS STARTED WITH A SMALL GRANT FROM THE CANADA COUNCIL'S EXPLORATIONS PROGRAM; WE HOPE TO OBTAIN ANOTHER TO KEEP IT GOING LONG ENOUGH TO BEGIN SUPPORTING ITSELF. ART METROPOLE ACTUALLY EXISTS AS A PHYSICAL LOCATION ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF THIS YONGE STREET HISTORIC SITE; IT CONTAINS A SMALL LIBRARY/ARCHIVE OF ARTISTS' CORRESPONDENCE AND PUBLICATIONS AND WILL BE MOUNTING PERIODIC SHOWS OF THIS MATERIAL. PLEASE VISIT THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE IN TORONTO.

WE'RE HOPING THAT WE'LL FIND THE MAJOR MARKET FOR OUR OFFERINGS AMONG ART LIBRARIANS. CERTAINLY THE PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS LISTED IN THE FIRST CATALOG SHOULD BE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY; MAY WE EXPECT AN ORDER FROM YOU SOON?

BEST REGARDS, Robert Handforth

ROBERT HANDFORTH, MANAGER

ARTISTS PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS

"THE 1984 MISS GENERAL IDEA PAVILION FOUNDATION"
A BLUEPRINT FOR TOMORROW

Maintenance Art which involved washing and waxing the floors of ART METRO which was due to open in a few hours. And open it did with a glittering load of the finest cocktillers available. The space was a welcome relief to many sandblasted eye and they all expresses extreme enjoyment during and after the event. Natch the official-dum artie scene didn't quite get around to coming but we managed supremely without.

A solid bank of Mr Peanut avec colour bars graced the display area above the archives as Granada Gazette's portrait by R00 starred down at the crowd from behind the moderne chinoise sales counter. All the material for the archive was not out as it is still a major work but some 25 individual boxed files of info on the artists was out with several hundred eso publications. By the end of the month it will probably be capital expenditure time again as we will be needing more shelving and display space.

Flakey had his hair (MINE CAMP) done by Mary-Lou at Sassons as well as his little black mustache. She (Mary-Lou) also added a green fringe to Sandy Staag and has turned Rodney into Marlon Blondo which goes very nicely with the balck leather jacket and jeans and fetish t-shirt and new shiny construction boots. A very eye catching out fit indeed for openings of major galleries.

Mary-Lou has become a definate designator in the scene that seems to have crept far beyond the hair-line.

Now for a few things more related to business.

We are about to go to press with the new Borderline Case print but our main image has become a bit greasy and wringled. Have heard on the great vine that you have the almost complete workks of the Magazine called LIFE and we would like to make a loan of one, for an image, for a colour seperation.

<input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL IDEA <input type="checkbox"/> ART COLORED INC. <input type="checkbox"/> MLE MAGAZINE	DIRECTORS: AA WILSON GRANADA GAZELLE FELICKS PARTZ JORGE ZONIAL
ADDRESS: 241 YONGE STREET ART METRO BUILDING TORONTO CANADA M5R 1N8	TELEPHONE (416) 598-7787
DATE	

"THE 1984 MISS GENERAL IDEA PAVILLION FOUNDATION"
A BLUEPRINT FOR TOMORROW

06 Feb 71
1974

Dear Mr. Peanut,

Well here I am back tinkling the keys again after a very long, too long, lay off. Personally it has been a very trying time for me since the arrival of the C.C. announcements weeks ago. Was on the phone at the job in the black tower awaiting the word of plans for a successful escape when I was informed that it was on the rocks. Good old C.C. did it to me again and thus forced me to spend seven gruelling weeks at the drafting boards working on real terminal realities for the years 1985 and 2000. But alas the dam has burst and I am out on the streets again after straying far to close to the edge and in fact hanging on by the finger tips. Guesome story but true. Have to talk it, type it out of my system. apologies.

It became apparent last week that despite finances I must flee and return to the comfy responsibilities of the mother company as G.I. and Art Metropole came out for the new season. Despite difficulties we managed to mount LUX-ON at AGO. I hear you hear rumours of this already at your end. Openings were very flashy with the internat art community flown in as the witnesses. Flakey Mine Camp and the Dr. riveted the attention as did the numerous Fetish T-shirts parading in the hollowed halls.. One grand night it was all oysters and champagne for the stars and the next night salami and payed-for-boozes for the ordinary folk.

While all this was happening the Goldrigers were working over time making those oh so necessary connections and entertained such illustrious guests as J. Coplans of the ART FORUM and Kasper Koenig of NSCAD.

Mucho connectionsmucho plans for the future and the immediate present. I contributed to J. Coplans visit by preforming a bit of

<input type="checkbox"/> GENRAL IDEA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART OFFICIAL INC. <input type="checkbox"/> FILE MEGAZINE
DIRECTORS: LA MONSON GRANADA GAZELLE FELICKS PARTZ JONGE ZONTAL
ADDRESS: 221 YONGE STREET GENERAL IDEA PAVILLION BUILDING TORONTO CANADA M5H N8
DATE _____ TELEPHONE (416) 348-7787

[illegible]

ART METROPOLIS BUILDING 241 YONGE STREET TORONTO CANADA M5B 1N6 (416) 584-7792

FILE Subscription statistics - GLAMOUR ISSUE FALL 1975

U.S.A.

NYC	56
SF	26
Berkeley-Oakland	20
Hollywood	8
L.A.	7
Madison Wisc.	5
Philadelphia	5
Chicago	10
Massachusetts	17
Michigan	11
Florida	10
California (misc.)	37
Buffalo	5
Rochester	5
Brooklyn	6
NY State (misc.)	11
New England (misc.)	9
Eastern States	12
Oregon	9
Washington	9
Arizona	9
Southern States	7
Colorado	11
Wisconsin (misc.)	6
Ohio	6
U.S. Misc.	8
	36
	352

ELSEWHERE

So. America	3
Australia & N.Z.	5
Elsewhere	3
	11

CANADA

Toronto	40
Vancouver	41
Montreal	15
Ottawa	25
Winnipeg	10
Victoria	8
London	6
Ontario	28
B.C.	20
Alberta	10
Quebec	7
Saskatchewan	6
Nova Scotia	7
New Brunswick	4
Misc.	4
	231

EUROPE

Berlin	73
London	17
Germany	25
England	16
Netherlands	11
France	9
Italy	5
Scandinavia	3
Europe misc.	6
	165

TOTAL

759

ARTISTS PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS

TIME
INCORPORATED

TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

FILE

Art-Official
241 Yonge Street
Toronto, Canada M5B, 1N8

Gentlemen:

I have before me the February, 1974 issue of your publication "File" which has just come to my attention. This publication simulates the cover of a publication of Time, Incorporated, LIFE Magazine. Time, Incorporated, is the owner of and has registered the trademarks "LIFE" and the cover design in the United States Patent Office and throughout the world, including Canada.

A check of our files indicates that your organization was not authorized to reproduce these trademarks.

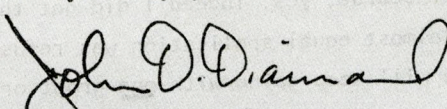
Your unauthorized simulation of the cover of LIFE Magazine constitutes trademark infringement and an unfair trade practice. Further, it constitutes unfair trading upon and appropriation of the goodwill and reputation of LIFE Magazine.

Accordingly, we have no alternative but to demand that you immediately discontinue any and all such trademark infringement and cease and desist from any further use of any and all copies of the offending and unlawful matter; and that all materials, including mats and art work making use of our trademarks which you have in your custody and control be destroyed. Please advise the undersigned as soon as these requests are implemented.

We trust that we will not have to take further action, but unless our request, as set forth in this letter is implemented immediately, and we are so advised in writing, we will have no other choice.

This letter is without prejudice to any and all rights Time, Incorporated may have in the premises at law or in equity.

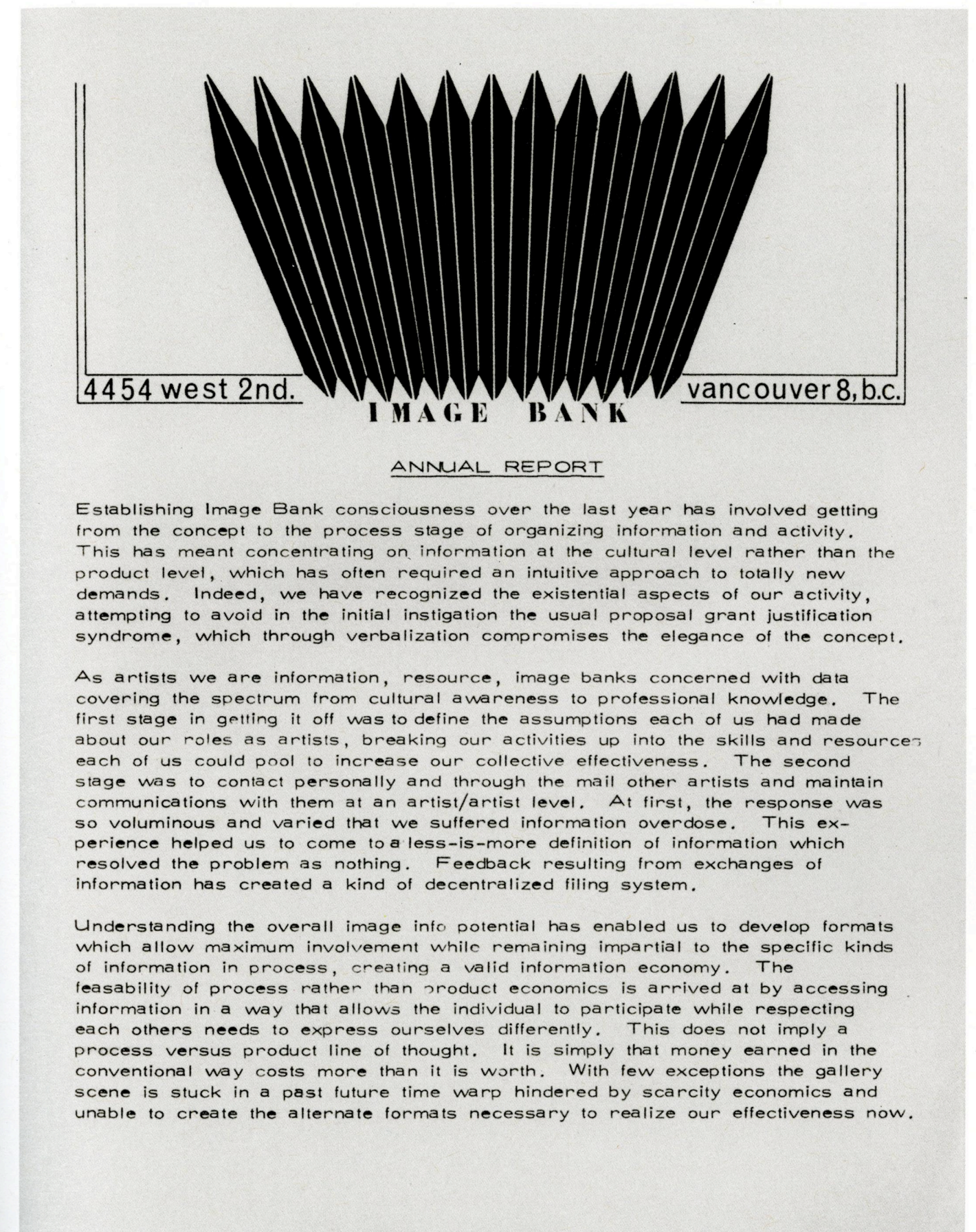
Very truly yours,


John D. Diamond
Assistant Counsel



- 01 "Annual Report" / Image Bank; Vancouver: Intermedia Press, 1972, [19 pp.]. Box C36, accession number 52.01, Morris/Trasov archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 02 "Archives Index Card.... Please Add my Name and Address to the Mailing List. I Am Interested in Images of...." [filled by Pedro Friedeberg] / Image Bank, 1972, 9 x 12 cm. Box C22, accession number 32.20, Morris/Trasov archive. Published in "FILE" Magazine (vol. 1, no. 1, 15 April 1972).
- 03 "Inventors of Today are Planning Now for Tomorrow! Look into the Future! Please Send Your Image of 1984 to Image Bank..." [Request sent to various Image Bank network participants in 1972] / Image Bank, 1972, 28.2 x 22.2 cm. Box C83, accession number 111.12, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 04 "Inventors of Today..." [Response sample] / author unknown, 1972, 28.2 x 22.2 cm. Box 10, accession number 33.02. Morris/Trasov archive.
- 05 Responses received to the request "Inventors of Today..." / Various authors, 1972. Approx. 150 items. Box C83, accession number 111.12, Morris/Trasov archive. Items photographed as they were displayed during Documentary Protocols II.
- 06 "The Marcel Duchamp Fan Club - Cultural Ecology Project.... Please Send Piss Pics for Barbara Rrose..." [Request sent to various Image Bank network participants in 1972] / Image Bank, 1972, 28.2 x 22.2 cm. Box 10, accession number 32.13.03, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 07 "The Marcel Duchamp Fan Club: Cultural Ecology Project ..." [Responses sample] / author unknown, 1972, 28.2 x 22.2 cm. Box 10, accession number 33.02, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 08 Responses received to the request "Please Send Piss Pics for Barbara Rrose" / Various authors, [approx. 150 items]. Box 10, accession number 33.02, Morris/Trasov archive. Items photographed as they were displayed during Documentary Protocols II.
- 09 "Great Canadian Split Project" [front and back] / General Idea and various collaborators, 1972. Accession number 126.07.48, Morris/Trasov archive.

- 10 "Concept Non Conceived" [front and back] / Robert Filliou, 1972.
Accession number 126.06.54, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 11 "International Image Exchange Directory" / Image Bank, 1972.
Vancouver: Talonbooks, [205 pp.]. Box C12, accession number 24.12,
Morris/Trasov archive.
- 12 Paste-up for the "Annual Artists' Directory" in FILE Magazine
(vol. 2, no. 5, February 1974) /assembled by Kate Craig, Michael
Morris and Vincent Trasov at the Western Front Society; published
by Art Official (General Idea), approx. 100 sheets with glued cutout
addresses from previous directories, plus additions. Box C19,
accession number 30.15, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 13 Image Bank archives cataloguing cards / Image Bank, October 1974,
February 1975, approx. 200 cards. Box A10, accession number 57.45,
Morris/Trasov archive.
- 14 Letter to Mr. Vincent Trasov / City Clerk of Vancouver, November 26,
1974, [1 p.]. Box C5, accession number 18.08, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 15 Notebook / Michael Morris, 1975, n. pag. Box 107, accession number
144.01, Morris Trasov Archive.



01.01

IMAGE BANK REQUEST LIST

pin it on your bulletin board
and plug into the subliminal

- Richard J.S. Guman

218 University Avenue, #5, Ithaca, New York, 14850 -
diners of the roadside variety and appropriate railroad
imagery, John Wilkes Booth assassin, Wild Bill Hickok
cowboy, Lone Ranger hero.

27 Farmcrest Drive, Agincourt, Ontario - skylines,
skyscrapers, clouds, Sky King.

5232 Lakewood Road, Ravenna, Ohio, 44266 - images
of O's.

389 Ethel Avenue, Mill Valley, Calif. 94041 - Pinky Lee
T. V. Star.

224 North Arcola Street, Angleton, Texas, 77515 -
comparisons.

87 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario - Easter Eggs.

4611 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver 8, B.C. - raised skirt
snaps, pics of instant death and anything brutiful.

3166 Washington St., San Francisco, Calif. 94115 -
anything relating to Dada.

420 3rd Ave, San Francisco, Calif. 94118 - images
of 19th Cent. hot air balloons plus images of street and
valley cars prior to 1920.

340 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Ont. - stupid but perfect
images.

1117 Geary St., San Francisco, Calif. 94109 - images
of clouds and fleshish.

Box 8590, Station H, Vanc. 5, B.C. - images 8 1/2"
x 11" paintings, drawings, photos, anything.

P.O. Box 462, Lyons, Colorado - postcards of Main
Streets (must be labeled "Main Street") and pics of
Crosley automobiles.

444 Cavour, Oakland, Calif. 94618 - tattoo pics & porno.
c/o Hardy, P.O. Box 814, Sausalito, Calif. 94965 -
Busier Brown & dog Tag, wolfs, dogs, ducks, fox,
Mr. & Mrs. Peanuts, home made toys from Ogallala,
Nebraska.

136 Middle Rd, Southborough, Mass. 01772 - pics of
lady wrestlers and midget wrestlers.

253 Finch Ave. E., Willowdale, Ont. - pics of Queen
Victoria and more local Dixendemons, classical art.

2271 Edgellow Rd, Victoria, B.C. - pics of mouths.

622 Le Cavalier, Ste-Foy, P.Q. - pics of all different
sizes of lips (S-M-L-XL), all kinds of tongues, people
in nudist colonies, monks & nuns in monasteries.
- Colin Thornton
- Mike McCafferty
- Nick Tchoupic
- Ant Farm (Doug)
- Pascal
- Dr. Brute
- Marianne
- Tim Mancusi
- Paul Oberst
- Dadaland
- Blewointment Press
- Jim Hockenhill
- Monte Cazzaza
- Honey Bananas
- Edwin W. Briggs
- David Gilhooly
- Aaron
- Rejean De Roy

In the last year the mediums immediately available to process the images and feedback from our format research have been print and video. Both mediums contain the recycling characteristic of duplicating themselves. The post card show and video exchange directory are the results of this research. Image Bank reality exists on the subliminal where all of us are affected and, by exposure, have access to visual information generated by media. These images spilling out all over belong to everyone. They form what Anti Farm calls the "environment" of our collective existence. There can be no copy-right on that which defines the imagination: recycling of media information in new contexts helps break down the control programmed into the original information, enabling it to become legal tender.

During 1971 six general information mailings were sent out to our regular mailing list which reaches approximately five hundred artists. Business as usual was handled by the New York Correspondence School of Dance in the Vancouver. Deposits have been filed for easy access at Image Bank in the New Era Image Trust where they form the basis for an artists' archives. The cause was greatly aided by Opportunities for Youth and the Canadian Craftsman Association, which allowed us to have Robert Fish as an assistant for the summer months.

Numerous workshops were held including ones for the Vancouver Art Gallery, Ontario College of Art, York University, University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. Image Bank contributed to the activities, meetings, events and exhibitions of Intermedia, Ace Space Co., General Idea, New York Correspondence School, Chicken Bank, Marcel Duchamp Fan Club, the Peem Co., Canada's National Magazine and the Little Hot Stove League.

Two introductions to the Local Initiatives Winter Works Program submitted to Manpower, with Intermedia and the Vancouver Art Gallery proposals, are included in this report. So far we have had no conformation on whether these projects have been approved but we intend to get them off somehow. We would like to hear your views and suggestions on these and our other projects and are particularly interested in your ideas for developing alternate outlets for creative expression. All our projects are free to artists and are financed by their information image potential. As a non profit operation any financial assistance would be most appreciated.

Many thanks to everyone for all the help so generously given in creating Image Bank.

I am interested in and would like more information on:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| A Space | Intermedia | Myra Peanut |
| Ace Space Co. | Innerspace Project | Mr. Peanut |
| Accumulation | Image Flow | C. Padin |
| Anti Farm | K. B. I. T. Box Co. | Tom Phillips |
| Allegory Novelties | Laughing Bear | Miss Rhonda |
| Archiv H. Sohn | Meiro Media | Terry Reid |
| Airpress | Mondo Antie | Dave Rimmer |
| Avenue B. School of Art | National Gallery/Canada Council | P. C. Shridiz |
| B. B. I. | New Era Social Club | Karl Spritz |
| Banal Beauty | New Era Image Trust | Shifty Shiller |
| Butch Bank | New Era Video | Lomte Springer |
| Boarderline Studios | New York Correspondence School | Taki Blues Singer |
| Barbanas Raiders | New York Correspondence Sch. of Chicago | Timm Urickis |
| Blew Oiniment Picture Book | New York Correspondence Sch. of Colorado | Blit Vazan |
| B. C. Monthly | New York Correspondence Dance Sch. of Vanc. | May Wilson |
| Chicken Bank | Northwest Mounted Valise | John Willenbecker |
| Canada's National Magazine | Pages Magazine | Ian Wallace |
| Canyon Cinema | Post Cards | |
| Camp Camosun | Reflections Press | |
| Catch House Press | Rainbow - Fill Spectrum | |
| Dadaland | Transcriptions | |
| Dada Processing Co. | Thruhco. | |
| Editions Tangente | Twenty Four Frames | |
| Fat City Sch. of Finds Arts. | Trash | |
| Fluxus West | Radio Music City Hall | |
| Fusus | Video Sphere: see Video Exchange Directory | |
| General Idea | c/o Image Bank | |
| Guerilla Art | 8 x 10 Art Portfolio | |
| House of Dust | | |
| Art Rat | Flakey | |
| Eleanor Antin | William Farley | |
| Al Balkavind | Fayhaye-Neighaye | |
| Gerry Bowles | A.M. Fine | |
| Anthony Benjamin | Fooly Muck Quagmire | |
| Dr. Brute | Miss General Idea | |
| Anna Banana | Sherry Grauer | |
| Honey Bananas | Geoff Hendricks | |
| Marlin Bartlett | Michael Hayden | |
| Richard C. | Miss Honey | |
| Robert Cumming | Gregg Jupiter | |
| Monte Cazzaza | Roy Kiyooka | |
| Dr. and Mrs. Dog | Alan Lindenfeld | |
| Peter Daglish | Lucy Lippard | |
| Marcel Dot | M. McCallarty | |
| John Dowd | John Margolis | |
| Robert Fish | Sally Peanut | |



ARCHIVES
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address to the mailing list.

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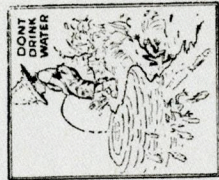
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cultural ecology project



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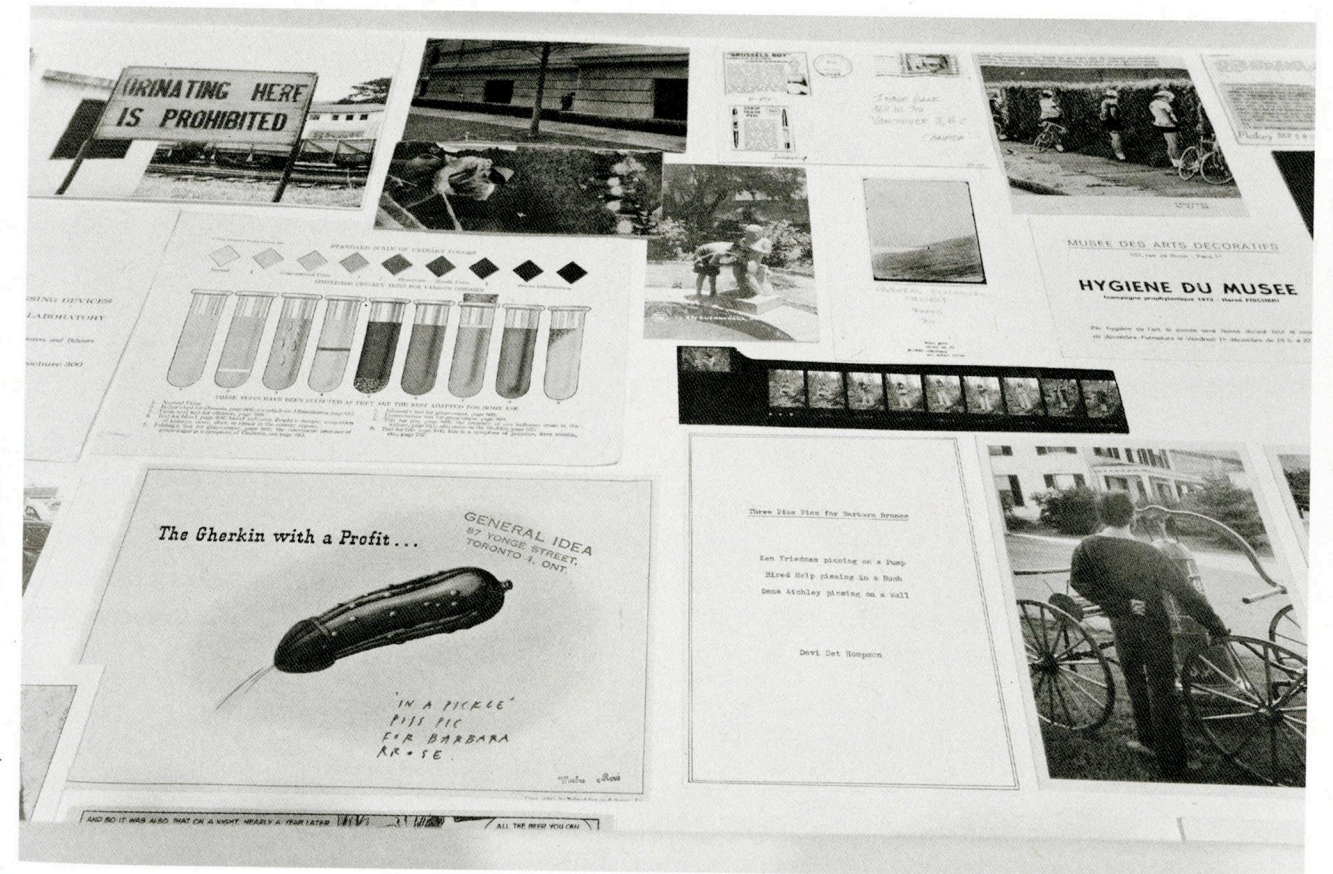
Barbara Rose %

IMAGE BANK
4811 W. 7th, VANCOUVER 8, B.C., CANADA

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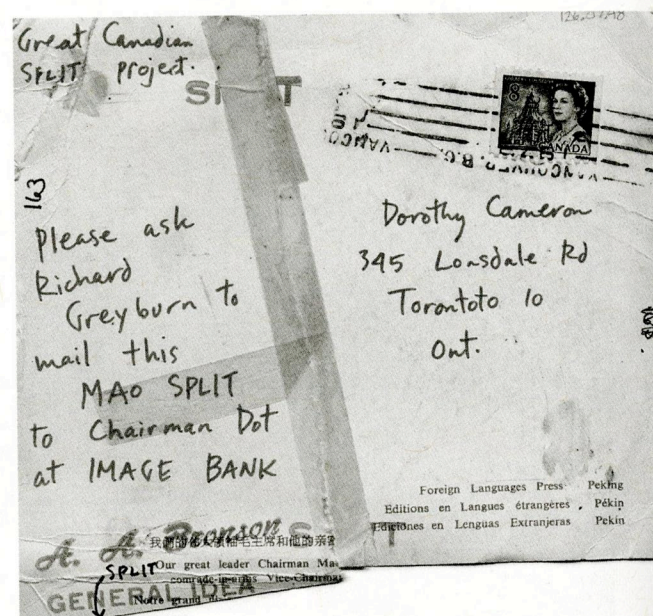
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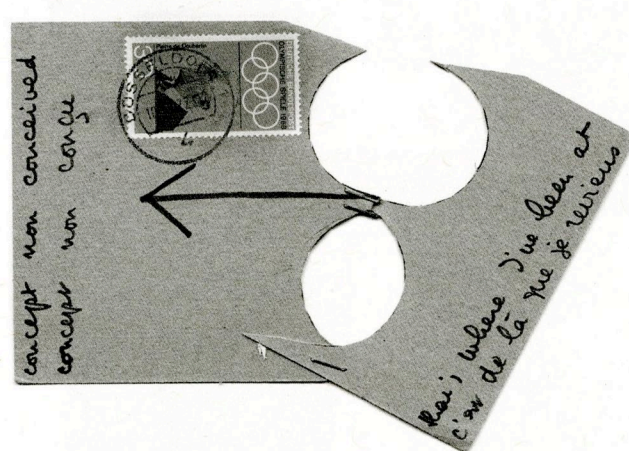
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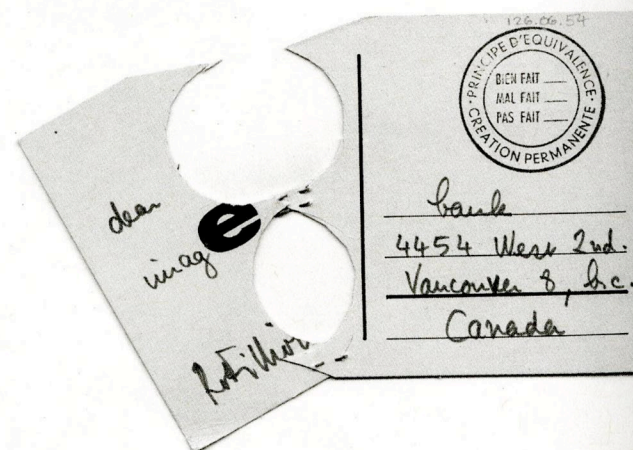
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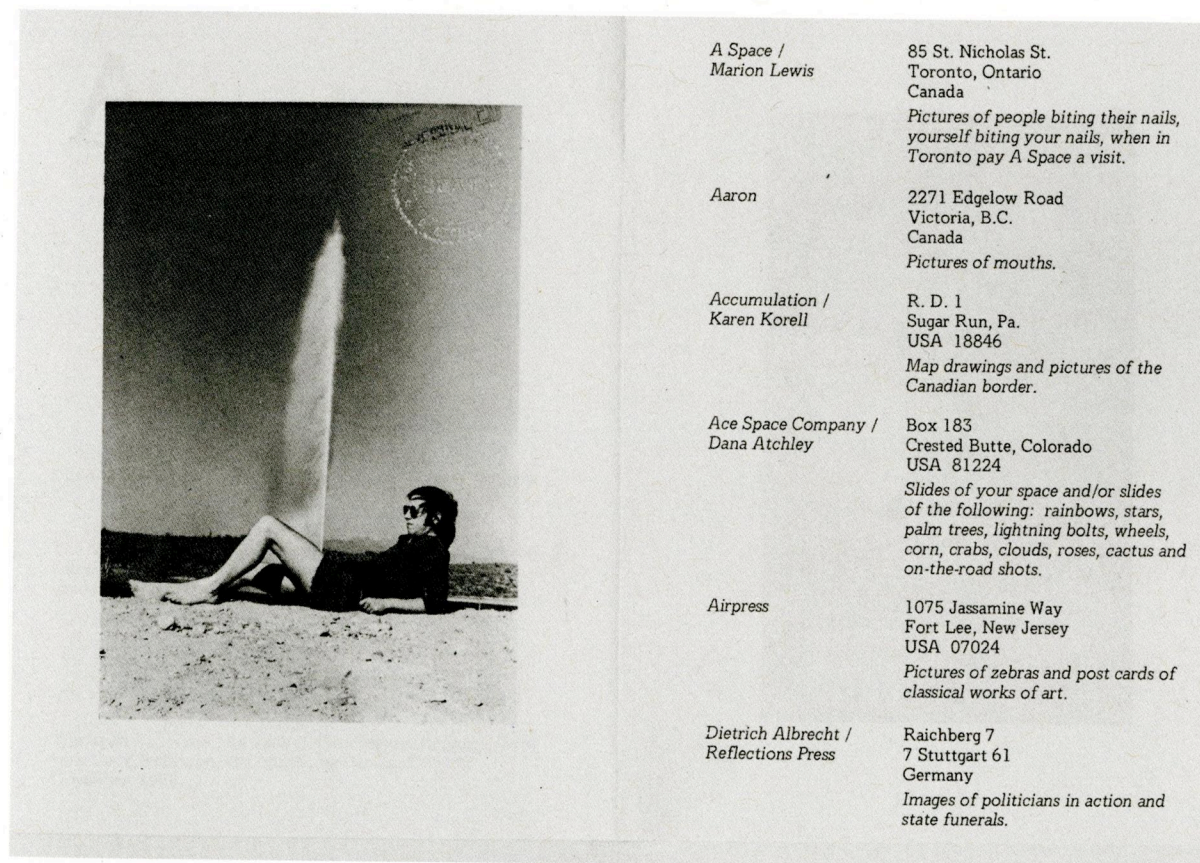
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CITY OF VANCOUVER - CANADA

DOUGLAS H. LITTLE
CITY CLERK
ROBERT HENRY
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

REPLY ATTN _____

November 26, 1974

Mr. Vincent Trasov
303 East 8th Avenue
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Mr. Trasov:

I am sorry to have to inform you that, having now the complete results from the Civic Election held last Wednesday, you did not obtain the required 5% of the total votes cast for Mayor, and must therefore, forfeit your \$300.00 deposit.

For your information the final standings were:

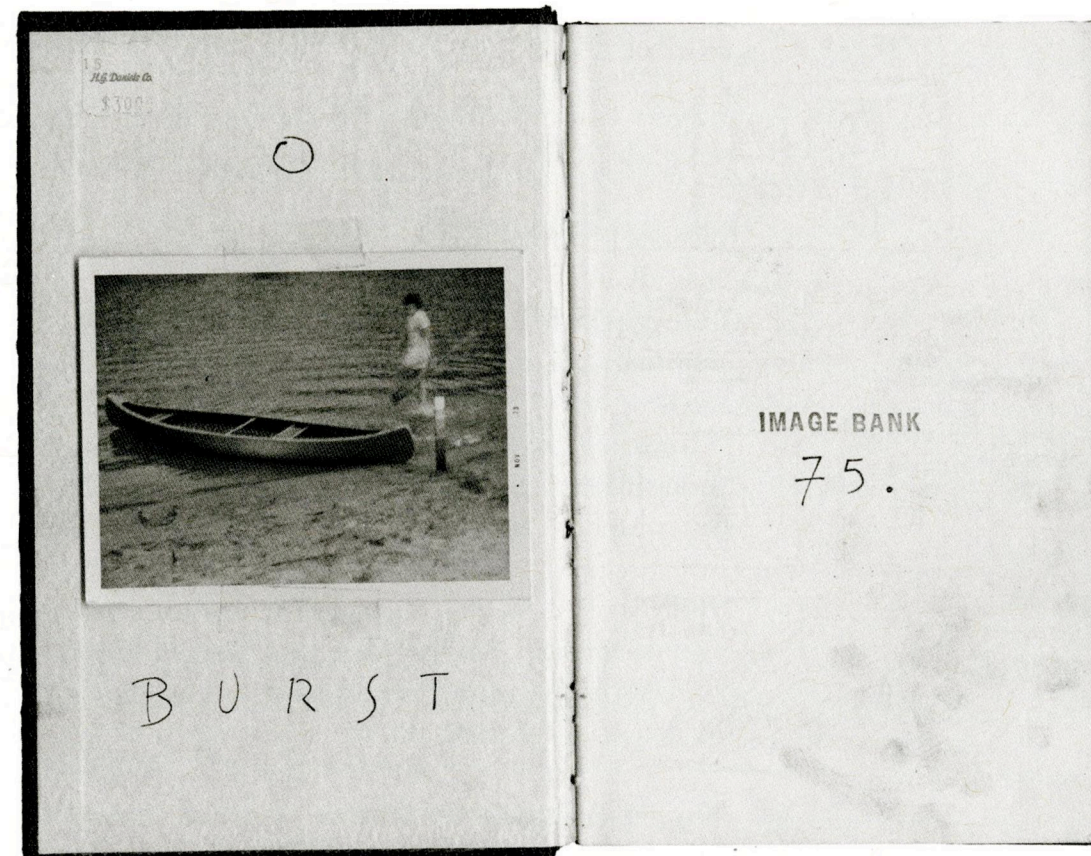
PHILLIPS, Arthur	37,816
PUIL, George	28,166
CAMPBELL, Brian	11,580
TRASOV, Vincent	2,745
(Rejected Ballots)	1,151
	<hr/>
	81,458

Yours faithfully,

D. H. Little
CITY CLERK

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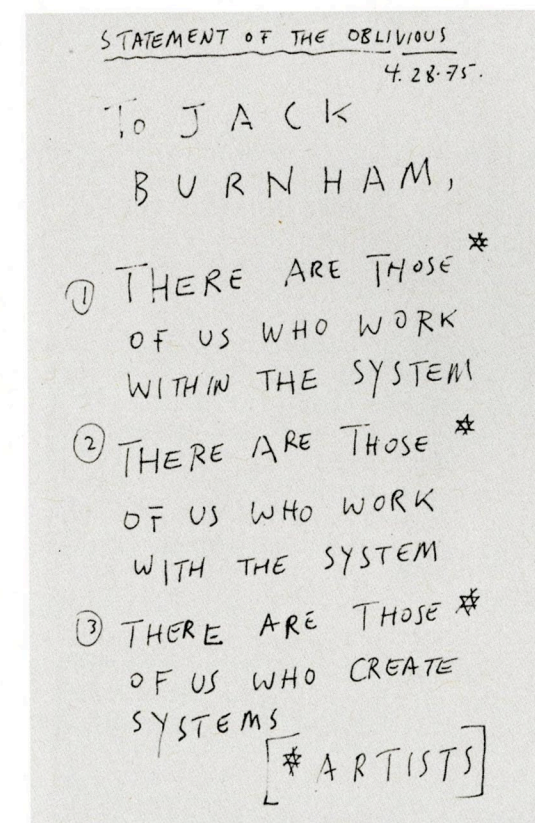
14



15.01



15.02



15.03

- 01 "Western Front Lodge, 303 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C." [newsletter] / The Western Front Lodge, 1973. [1 p.]. Box 17, file 6, Western Front Society, gift of Western Front Society 2007, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Vancouver.
- 02 Western Front Archives cataloguing cards / Western Front Society; Image Bank, December 1974. Accession number 57. 45., Morris/ Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 03 "Advertising and Promotion" [receipts and other documents] / Michael Morris and Vincent Trasov. Accession number: 112. 07, Morris/ Trasov Archive. As displayed during Documentary Protocols II.
- 04 "'Hollywood' Bank Statements and Salary Records" [receipts and other documents] / Michael Morris and Vincent Trasov. Accession numbers: 112.01, 112.04, Morris/Trasov Archive. As displayed during Documentary Protocols II.
- 05 "Business As Usual at the Western Front" [newsletter] / The Western Front Society, 1975. [8 pp.].



303 EAST 8th AVE. VANCOUVER 10, B. C.

1973 is the year of the founding of a new social and cultural phenomenon: the Western Front Lodge. The Lodge's headquarters is the ancient, palatial and mellow former temple of the Mount Pleasant Knights of Pythias and Terminal Temple of the Pythian sisters at 303 East Eighth Avenue, one block from Kingsway and Broadway.

This building has the potential of being a center for the fraternal order that has long been developing in Vancouver on the subliminal; an association of people with a certain consciousness in common. It is better not to try to define that consciousness too exactly, but over the past few years it has been manifesting itself through the work of many individuals and groups involved with communications media, the arts, and in general with the cultural ecology of our time.

Since the acquisition of this building on the first of March, a wide variety of activities have already taken place within its formerly austere halls: a fine and all-encompassing opening party; a series of performances of plays by Marlowe and Brecht by the Montreal theatre group, Theater One; showings of films and slides; workouts by the Australia/New Zealand cricket team; Tai Chi classes and other events, but we have only begun to explore the possibilities. Art exhibitions, films, musical and dance performances, workshops, poetry readings, media events, indoor sports, social activities: the Lodge's concerns are limited only by the imaginations of its members and the resources at our disposal.

We are already working on the development of a members' lounge which we hope will have bar facilities, and a dining room for members and their friends. One of our first goals is the establishment of an interesting social ambience in which people may meet and from which we hope will emerge a sense of the Lodge as a vital and creative social entity.

This letter is your invitation to become a charter member of the Western Front Lodge. Your membership fee will entitle you to special rates of admission to all events taking place in the building, use of the dining room and social spaces, and space use for your own projects by arrangement. The first General Meeting of the Lodge will take place some time in July, when we will be able to discuss in detail the possibilities. We hope you will be interested in participating in the formation and growth of a new and exciting project.

Membership fees are: General Membership, \$5 a year.
Sustaining Membership, \$50 a year.
Life Membership, donations of \$100 or more.
Please make cheques payable to the WESTERN FRONT LODGE, and in case of questions call us at 876-9343 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

SUBJECT ART EVENT _____ CAT.NO. _____

THE WESTERN FRONT
308 EAST 6TH ST.
VANCOUVER, B.C. V6T 1S1

TITLE ART STARS IN HOLLYWOOD - THE DECADEANCE _____

*ARTIST: AUTHOR _____
M WILLIAMS, C. LORD, ~~JEANETTE~~, W. SHARP _____

EDITOR _____

PRODUCTION DATE FEBRUARY 1974 _____

FORMAT VIDEO - 52 MIN. b+w. _____

PUBLISHER ~~WEST~~ WESTERN FRONT VIDEO MEGAN WILLIAMS _____

COUNTRY U.S.A. _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION QUALITY GOOD - ORIGINAL TAPE IS _____
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- DUBS SHOULD BE REQUESTED FROM ORIGINAL - SALE OF TAPE/WHEEL _____
- ALSO THROUGH ART METROPOLE - 241 VINCE ST. 3RD FLOOR TORONTO ONT _____
- MAJOR COLLABORATION OF THE ETHERIAL NETWORK - THE PRESENTATION _____
OF THE SPRING OUR AWARDS FOR ARTS, INCLUDING AN HONORARY AWARD GIVEN _____
1964 (FEB. 27) BY MAJOR COLLABORATORS, JIM ARNOLD, KEVIN COLOJIA, JOHN JACK COUNTY _____
DAGLINS, WILLIAMSHY SHANKS, AND OTHERS, KEVIN COLOJIA, JOHN JACK COUNTY _____
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SUBJECT MUSIC
CODE
TITLE THE GREAT LEARNING
ARTIST: AUTHOR CORNELIUS CARDEW
EDITOR PAUL WONG + GLENN LEWIS
PRODUCTION DATE MARCH 15, 1974
FORMAT 1/2" VIDEO TAPE, B+W, approx. 45 minutes
PUBLISHER THE WESTERN FRONT
COUNTRY CANADA
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONDUCTED BY MARTIN BARTLETT,
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7

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CODE _____

TITLE GENERAL IDEA'S 1984 MISS GENERAL IDEA PAGEANT REHEARSAL

ARTIST: AUTHOR GENERAL IDEA

EDITOR GLENN LEWIS & ~~BEAR~~ JORGE ZONTAL

PRODUCTION DATE JUNE 21/74

FORMAT 1/2" VIDEO TAPE B+W

PUBLISHER THE WESTERN FRONT

COUNTRY CANADA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION A PERFORMANCE BY GENERAL IDEA

OF TORONTO DURING THEIR EXHIBITION AT THE WEST-ERN FRONT

QUALITY - POOR

ENTERED BY PATRICK RUDY DATE DEC 16/74

SUBJECT PROSE [REDACTED] [REDACTED] CAT NO. THE WESTERN FRONT
303 EAST 8th AVE.
VANCOUVER, B.C. V5T 1S1

COUNTRY CANADA READING DONE IN VANCOUVER WHICH
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM NEW WORK, "SERUM B-23."

TITLE WILLIAM BURROUGHS'S READING IN VANCOUVER
ARTIST: AUTHOR WILLIAM BURROUGHS'S
EDITOR GLENN LEWIS + PAUL WOPF
PRODUCTION DATE NOV 17/74
FORMAT 1/2" WIDE TAPE, B+W 3-30 MINUTE TAPES.
PUBLISHER UNPUBLISHED BY THE WESTERN FRONT
COUNTRY CANADA

ENTERED BY P. REMDY DATE DEC 16/74

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THE WESTERN FRONT

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Business As Usual At The Western Front

LIVING AND WORKING AT THE WESTERN FRONT

The WESTERN FRONT is not only an art centre in respect to all the events, programs and exhibitions that take place, it is also the working space for the artists who live there: Michael Morris, Glenn Lewis, Mr. Peanut, Dr. Brute, Lady Brute, Martin Bartlett, Henry Greenhow, Myra Peanut and Notary Sojae. The fact of the WESTERN FRONT as a vital art centre is due to this unique combination of living and working. For visiting artists who are staying at the FRONT, they not only produce their events in a gallery context but they also live with it. This situation initiates a new context for artists where the division between art and life, hopefully, dissolves into more realistic meanings.

Some of our more personal, dubious achievements last year: Dr. Brute had a field day painting leopard spots all over the Vancouver Art Gallery. The gallery almost disappeared with this onslaught of camouflage.

Lady Brute took to the airwaves and appeared as FLYING LEOPARD, frightening innocent citizens, flying past on her wings of the spirit. Mr. Peanut made a dent on the voters of Vancouver but they didn't elect him Mayor. Myra and the Peanettes made their appearance on the hustings along with Mr. Peanut and sang their way into the hearts of the National media.

In February the WESTERN FRONT flew south on a package tour to HOLLYWOOD and descended the staircase at the ELKS BUILDING with General Idea (they ascend the Escalier d'Honneur), Lowell Darling, Willoughby Sharp, Ant Farm, John Dowd and eight hundred others at the DECCADANCE. It was ART'S ONE MILLION AND ELEVENTH BIRTHDAY. Everyone got awards and everyone blew out the candle.

Flakey took out his chamois and polished the last box in the GREAT WALL OF 1984 at the National Research Library in OTTAWA. Some library officials have borrowed a pair of men's underwear, an old jock strap and a woman's liberation letter, so it does seem that the mural is performing its library function well.

In April and again in September of this year the WESTERN FRONT will present a series of exhibitions, viewings, soap operas and night club acts on the EASTERN FRONT at A SPACE in TORONTO.

LAST YEAR AT THE WESTERN FRONT

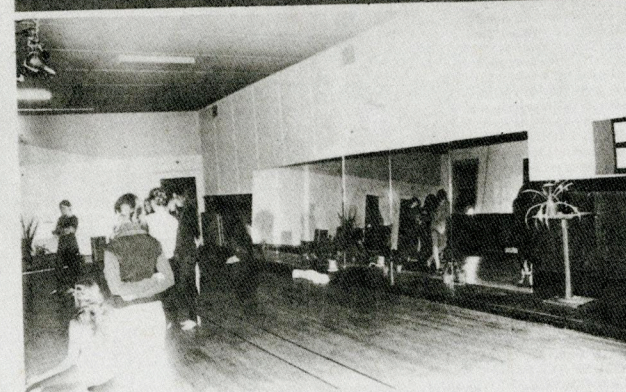
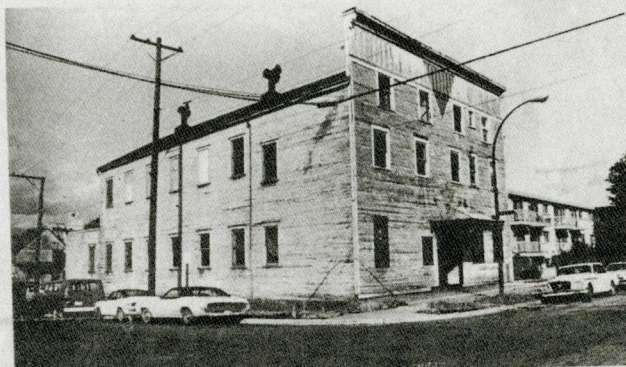
1974 was a very successful year at the WESTERN FRONT. A varied program of events was embarked upon. The audience were also varied and enthusiastic. It is difficult to sum up all the visits, experiences, events, performances, even spectaculars! How to give you the warm feelings from all those great poetry readings?

Last year our program of music events, performances and exhibitions was assisted by a grant from the CANADA COUNCIL'S EXPOSITIONS PROGRAM. Our gratitude is extended to them for the success our program enjoyed.

POETRY SERIES

There were seventeen readings on Monday nights between January and May at the FRONT: one of the best environments for readings in the city by all accounts. Robin Blaser's first reading in many years was a highly anticipated event. The Four Horsemen gave us spirited renditions of their song — like, sound poetry, weaving their voices, extending the possibilities of voice, rhythm, meaning. Greg Curnoe came from LONDON, Ontario, read from his journals and showed slides and video of his bicycles and their wheels. Most of these readings were recorded on video and sound tape and are available at the WESTERN FRONT for viewing or listening. They may also be purchased or rented on request.

Last year's readings were organized by Gerry Gilbert and Dwight Gardiner and made possible by a grant from the CANADA COUNCIL. This year the poetry committee has been enlarged to include Roy Kiyooka, Daphne Marlatt, Opal L. Nations, George Bowering, Mary Beth Knechtel, as well as Gerry Gilbert and Dwight Gardiner. Contact Mary Beth at the WESTERN FRONT — 876-9343 or Dwight Gardiner — 738-9007 regarding inquiries or policy.



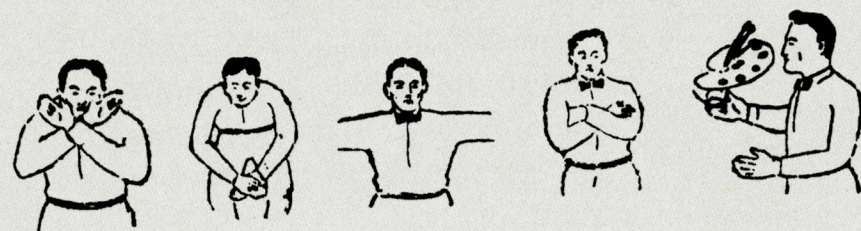
NEW MUSIC SERIES

There were nine music events performed including Cornelius Cardew's THE GREAT LEARNING for many voices and drums; Martin Bartlett's FIVE DIRECTIONS; The Vital Baton Concert, which featured the work of young local composers; CLASSICAL MUSIC OF NORTHERN INDIA by Balbir Singh Banghu; the PASCAL SONG RECITAL with Hank Bull at the piano; TRADITIONAL JAPANESE MUSIC performed by Takeo Yamashiro and Wendy Stuart; an evening of ELECTRONIC MUSIC organized by Martin Bartlett; and a concert of music and theatre work C MAJOR RESPONSE TIME SHEET written by Don Druick and performed by Alex Diakun.

Martin Bartlett is responsible for our music program and inquiries should be directed to him. Some of the new areas which our music program is interested in exploring are: the composition of works in open style, pieces which may not be totally notated but which call for the exercise of improvisatory freedom on the part of the performer; extension of the musical means through experimental instruments, particularly electronic ones, and through devices to amplify and extend the ranges of conventional instruments; collaborations with artists in other media — dance, theatre, film and video; investigation of non-western musics in order to develop understanding of a variety of different theoretical systems and to discover techniques applicable to our own musical directions; developing new relationships with the audience, creating pieces calling for audience participation and presenting works in different environments than the usual concert situation.

- 01 "A MAJOR WORK EVENT.... Send Contents for Your Own Permanent Safety Deposit Box...." [request for participation] / New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver [Glenn Lewis], c. 1972. Glenn Lewis fonds, Vancouver.
- 02 Cards for participants to select number of safety deposit box / New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver [Glenn Lewis], c. 1973. Glenn Lewis fonds, Vancouver. Photographed by Anne Bénichou in the home of Glenn Lewis, Roberts Creek
- 03 Card for participants to select number of safety deposit box [filled by Robert Filliou] / New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver [Glenn Lewis], c. 1973. Glenn Lewis fonds, Vancouver.
- 04 Card for participants to select number of safety deposit box [filled by The Hoo Hoo Archives] / New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver [Glenn Lewis], c. 1973. Glenn Lewis fonds, Vancouver.
- 05 Card for participants to select number of safety deposit box [filled by COUM Transmissions] / New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver [Glenn Lewis], c. 1973. Glenn Lewis fonds, Vancouver.
- 06 Card to survey the selection of boxes [altered by an anonymous participant] / New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver [Glenn Lewis]. Glenn Lewis fonds, Vancouver.
- 07 The Great Wall of 1984" [1973] by the New York Corres-Ponge Dance School of Vancouver [Glenn Lewis] at the National Science Library. Box no. 1855, 1887, 1900, 1924 / Photographers: Anne Bénichou and Anik Glaude, 2005.

NEW YORK CORRES - SPONGE DANCE SCHOOL OF VANCOUVER



A MAJOR WORK EVENT

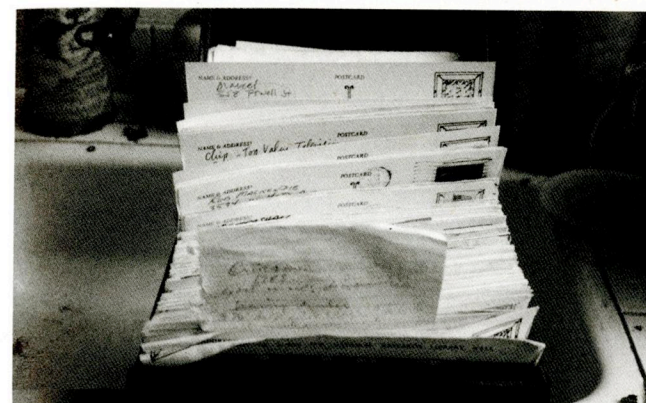
SEND CONTENTS FOR YOUR OWN PERMANENT SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX

365 plexiglass boxes have been made which together form a wall 'mural' 25 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 4 inches for the National Research Library being constructed in Ottawa . Each box is 9 inches deep by 8.21 inches high by either 9.85 inches , 10.18 inches or 10.81 inches wide. They are all clear except for a reflective, black back. The clear front is screwed on .They are numbered (for internal reasons) from 1620 to 1984 but these numbers will not appear on the boxes unless you actually include one in the contents you send .

Fill out the enclosed card to let us know if you intend to fill a safety deposit box. If the box you want is already taken you will be sent another updated card so that you can select a different box .

The event begins January 1, 1973 and ends on December 31, 1973 . Your contents should be sent before the latter date.

If you don't receive any replies from me (Flakey) you will know that you received the box you requested - 1ST CHOICE THAT IS .



NAME & ADDRESS? *Refillion, 06 St Jeannet*

WHICH BOX NUMBER WOULD YOU LIKE? *1926*

SECOND CHOICE? *any one*

WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO SEND YOUR CONTENTS? *do it on the spot when I come to Canada this summer and lose you all up guys in Vancouver*

NEW YORK CORRES
SPONGE DANCE
SCHOOL OF VANCOUVER
c/o FLAKEY
358 POWELL ST
VANCOUVER 4,
B.C.
CANADADA

PAR AVION
AIR MAIL
POSTCARD

02

03

NAME & ADDRESS? *THE HOO HOO ARCHIVES
3105 Smith
GARDEN ARK 70743*

WHICH BOX NUMBER WOULD YOU LIKE? *1956*

SECOND CHOICE? *1957*

WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO SEND YOUR CONTENTS? *August '73*

NEW YORK CORRES
SPONGE DANCE
SCHOOL OF VANCOUVER
c/o FLAKEY
358 POWELL ST
VANCOUVER 4,
B.C.
CANADADA

POSTCARD

NAME & ADDRESS? *COUM
10, Martello St,
HACKNEY,
LONDON E-8.
ENGLAND.*

WHICH BOX NUMBER WOULD YOU LIKE? *1980*

SECOND CHOICE? *1947*

WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO SEND YOUR CONTENTS? *nothing*

NEW YORK CORRES
SPONGE DANCE
SCHOOL OF VANCOUVER
c/o FLAKEY
358 POWELL ST
VANCOUVER 4,
B.C.
CANADADA

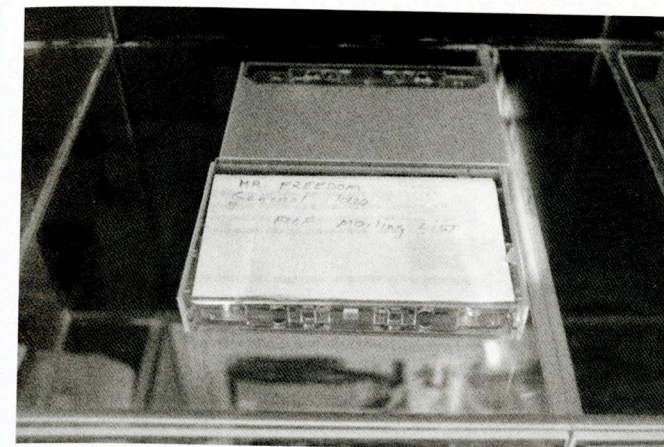
BY AIR MAIL
POSTCARD

04

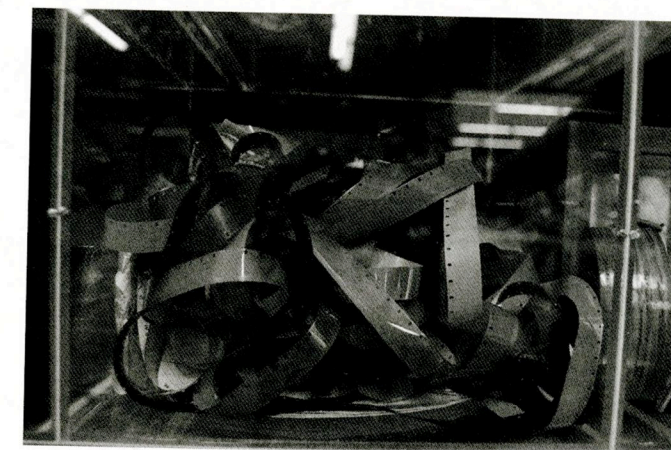
05

ARRANGEMENT OF BOXES FOR NATIONAL RESEARCH LIBRARY WALL

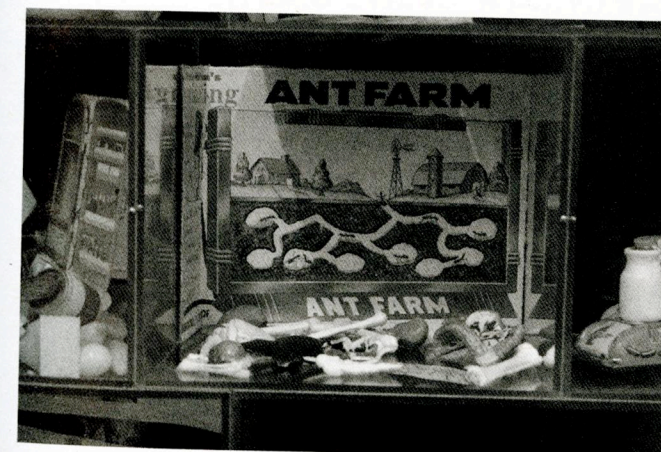
1600	1631	1632	1633	1634	1635	1636	1637	1638	1639	1640	1641	1642	1643	1644	1645	1646	1647	1648	1649	1650
1651	1652	1653	1654	1655	1656	1657	1658	1659	1660	1661	1662	1663	1664	1665	1666	1667	1668	1669	1670	1671
1672	1673	1674	1675	1676	1677	1678	1679	1680	1681	1682	1683	1684	1685	1686	1687	1688	1689	1690	1691	1692
1693	1694	1695	1696	1697	1698	1699	1700	1701	1702	1703	1704	1705	1706	1707	1708	1709	1710	1711	1712	1713
1714	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725	1726	1727	1728	1729	1730	1731	1732	1733	1734
1735	1736	1737	1738	1739	1740	1741	1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	1748	1749	1750	1751	1752	1753	1754	1755
1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	1762	1763	1764	1765	1766	1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772	1773	1774	1775	1776
1777	1778	1779	1780	1781	1782	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788	1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797
1798	1799	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807	1808	1809	1810	1811	1812	1813	1814	1815	1816	1817	1818
1819	1820	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839
1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860
1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881
1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902
1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923
1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965



07.01



07.02



07.03



07.04

- 01 Card to gather data on individuals and organizations using video in view of assembling a directory to exchange tapes and information / Michael Goldberg; Vancouver: Intermedia, 1971. Box A 28, accession no. 71.37, Morris/Trasov archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 02 "Radical Software" (no. 4, Summer 1971) / Raindance Corporation, [76 pp.].
- 03 Video Exchange Directory / Michael Goldberg; Vancouver: Intermedia Press, 1971, n. pag. Box C61, accession 94. 01, Morris/Trasov archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- 04 "Matrix international video meet [sic] will take place in Vancouver, January 17-21, 1973..." [Bilingual information sheet sent to individuals and organizations listed in the directory in view of the meeting] / Satellite Video Exchange Society [Michael Goldberg], c. 1973. Box C6, accession no. 26.29, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 05 "Video Exchange Directory Satellite" [Bilingual information sheet on the process of transferring tapes from European to North American standards] / Satellite Video Exchange Society [Michael Goldberg], c. 1973. Box C6, accession no. 26.29, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 06 Catalogue of videotapes/ Video Inn; Satellite Video Exchange Society, c. 1973, n. pag. Box C6, accession no. 26.29, Morris/Trasov archive.
- 07 Form for videotape catalogue / Video Inn; Satellite Video Exchange Society, c. 1973, [1 p]. Organization file: "Video Inn Video Satellite," A Space fonds, gift of A Space 1996, E.P. Taylor Library and archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
- 08 Letter to A Space / Michael Goldberg, c. 1974, [1 p]. Organization file: "Video Inn Video Satellite," A Space fonds.
- 09 Proposal for a program devoted to video at the Canada Council for the Arts / Michael Goldberg, c. 1975, [8 pp.]. Box 80, A Space fonds.

VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY

BOTTIN "VIDEO INTERNATIONAL"

IF YOU ARE PRODUCING 1/2" OR 1"

Si vous travaillez avec la bande magnétoscopique

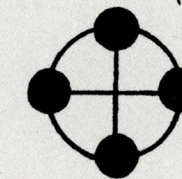
VIDEOTAPES, PLEASE FILL IN

("vidéo") 1/2" ou 1", veuillez bien remplir cette

AND MAIL THIS CARD.

If not, please

recycle.



carte et nous la retourner par la poste.

Sinon, veuillez la faire circuler.

PLEASE PRINT - EN LETTRES MOULÉES, SVP	
Name Nom	
Address Adresse	
Tél. ()	
Equipment at your disposal Équipement à votre disposition	VTR use/interest Usage/intérêt vidéo
1/2"	
1"	
PLEASE SEND ME VEUILLEZ M'ENVOYER	
COPIES OF THIS CARD FOR DISTRIBUTION COPIES DE CETTE CARTE POUR DISTRIBUTION	

Vous recevrez une liste préliminaire dans un mois. Celle-ci sera régulièrement mise à jour.

Le "vidéo" petit format (et bientôt, les programmes télé en cassettes magnétoscopiques) permet une communication ouverte entre créateurs, chercheurs et même le public en général.

Si vous désirez correspondre, échanger ou collaborer avec d'autres personnes travaillant dans le domaine du "vidéo" alternatif, le bottin "VIDEO INTERNATIONAL" vous sera utile.

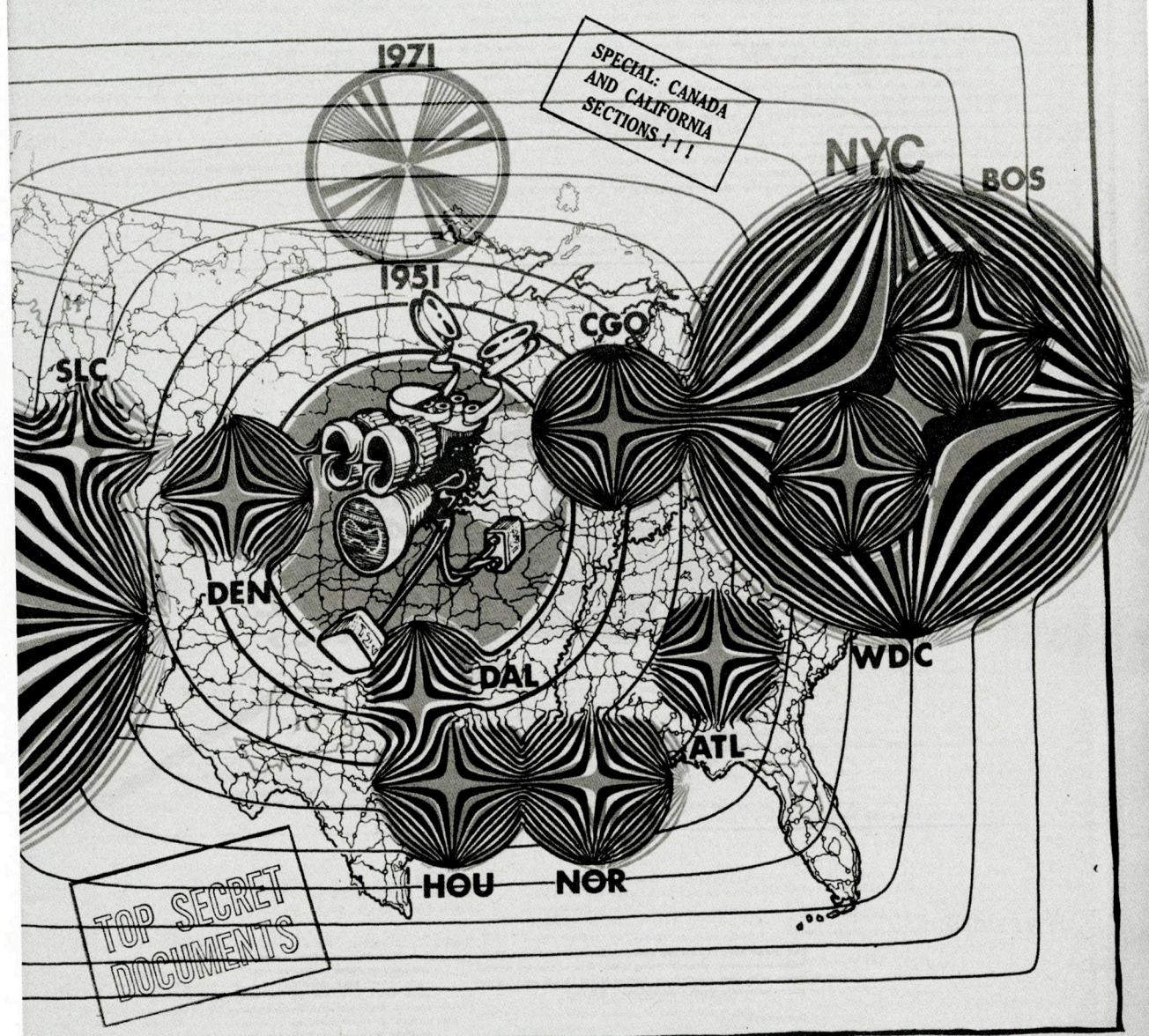
You will receive a preliminary compiled list in next month's mailing, which will be regularly kept up to date.

If you would like to find out what others are up to, and are interested in corresponding, exchanging or collaborating with others, please send in your card now.

You might also write: RAINDANCE CORPORATION
24 East 22 Street
New York, N.Y. 10010
(U.S.A.)

Their "Radical Software" is a fine magazine on alternate video. Subscription rate is \$5 a year for 4 issues.

RADICAL SOFTWARE

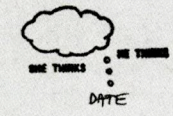


NUMBER 4 SUMMER 1971 \$3.00

02.01



INTERMEDIA 2023 EAST 1ST
VANCOUVER 12 B.C. CANADA
255 7358



DEAR MERRILY -

ALTHOUGH I DON'T MENTION IT IN MY BLURB, I'VE PRODUCED QUITE A FEW 1/2" TAPES. BESIDE THE 16 TAPES IN FRENCH FOR THE WINNIPEG PROJECT, I'VE DONE TAPES OF -
- "SPECTRUM" - 23 MIN. 1ST CHOREOGRAPHY OF "BAMET HORIZONS", A NEW GROUP IN VANCOUVER, BY MORLEY WISEMAN
- "LIFE "ANYTHA WORKSHOP" WITH CHRISTA PRAEVS. AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE. 1/2 HR
- "DON DRUCK AND FRIENDS". MINI-MOCK, ELECTRIC ORGANO, ELECTRIC PIANO, SAXOPHONE, FLUTE AND ELECTRIC BASS GUITAR. DEBAMINA. 20 MIN.
- "ROVER II INSTRUCTION MANUAL" - I GOT TIRED OF REPEATING IT AT WORKSHOPS
- "THE WIRED CITY" - GILLES BERGERON, DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, QUEBEC - 10 MIN
- "VIDEOTHEATRE" - WORKSHOP TAPES, T.V. COMMERCIALS. 500N - PRODUCTION TAPE.
GETTING A THEATRE PIECE TOGETHER WITH SOME FRIENDS, USING T.V. + VIDEO PROJECTION.
"YAWN" - 50 DIED. THE ONLY TIME I'VE BEEN ABLE TO WORK ON MY ARTICLE AND BLURB HAS BEEN FROM MIDNITE TO 2 A.M. LAST NIGHT AND TONIGHT.
THE ANSWERS FOR THE DIRECTORY ARE TRICKLING IN RATHER SLOWLY. I'VE SENT OUT OVER 800 CARDS, BUT IT IS HARD TO PREDICT THE RETURN. NEXT ISSUE MAYBE.
SEE YOU IN LATE JUNE.
P.S. - YOU MIGHT MENTION IN R.S. THAT I AM ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN SPECIALTY USES OF VTR.

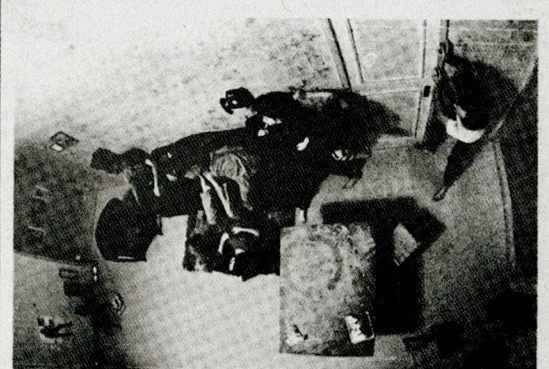
A BIENTOT,
Mike

With the advent of cable television, cassettes and home computer terminals we will be faced with an onslaught of useless information. The disparity between available information (disseminated from sources controlled by the politico-economic structure) and what we know to be more true has already led to mass rejection of that system.
Communication involves more than dissemination or exchange of information. Emission of information treats the receiver as a machine; communication implies human participation.
Small format VTR offers us the possibility of slowly displacing the information power trippers; not by our plugging into the consumer distribution matrix, but by destroying it. A new level of awareness is growing with increased human interaction through new telecommunication grids. Each time someone new holds a portable video camera, it spreads. A vital change occurs, from consumer to producer, from inhibition to creative self-expression, from observer to participant. We are all artists.
All the world's a stage, a dream, a movie, a game, a book—and now it's on T.V. When the initial surprise at seeing oneself on the time-mirror is over, T.V. dies, and we are reborn. Into what? It has already been labelled "second generation television". Like "pop art", it sounds like a new ephemeral trip for the consumer, a new kind of programming, that expands the limits of television as we now know it.
In that light, we become the avant-garde of TEEVEE, opening new doors, building a new language, with little concern to where that door leads, or what is being said with our vocabulary.
The artist is not ahead of his time, he is in it. The consumer is living in the past. Video breaks down that gap.

Mike Goldberg

No space to print
Communications Experiment:
An Environment,
Mike's clear,
non-hype report
on the realities
of setting up an
electric environ-
ment. The project
was funded
by the Sec of State
and the Dept of
Communications.
Mike or the gov.
people should
have copies of the
report.

In progress—preparing a tape exchange between ballet companies, grant to go to Japan and research video trips.
Some trips: Montreal, December 1969—Pyramid of T.V.'s with hidden CCTV camera behind and between the sets. Although you could see your face from different angles, you could not look yourself in the eye.
Winnipeg, November 1970—Conference on "The Franco-Manitoban Family"—Environment with Eldophor video projector, light show (by Luci, from Montreal), sensory "decompression chamber"; and demand-television system (manually operated) in workshop rooms. Rather than invite a guest speaker, 14 specialists were asked to prepare talks to the delegates, and I videotaped them on a cross-country flight. On opening night the local French Radio station broadcast live from the conference and delegates' radios served as sound-system.
Vancouver, January 1971—"Room on its Side", with colour T.V. and cablevision, working telephone, chesterfield, table and chairs, etc. A monitor at the exit showed the room right-side up (the camera was on its side), and a 30 second video loop delay allowed visitors to see themselves back in the room, walking sideways on the wall.



INTERMEDIA MME WORKSHOP
IN "ROOM ON ITS SIDE" THIS PHOTO IS
UPSIDE-DOWN

VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY



NAME	LAST FIRST MIDDLE, SUFFIX
DATE	
ADDRESS	
AREA	
TEL. ()	
EQUIPMENT AT YOUR DISPOSAL	VTR use/interest
Equipment a votre disposition	Usage/interest video


VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY—I do not wish to become a distributor, merely to facilitate communication and collaboration between people into small-format VTR. Everyone who sends in the feedback form will receive a compiled list. If you have not yet received a postcard, please help by filling in this form and sending it to:
VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY c/o IMAGE BANK
4454 West 2nd, Vancouver 8, B.C. CANADA

CANADA 21

02.02

VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY
BOTTIN VIDEO INTERNATIONAL
c/o IMAGE BANK 4454 w 2nd Vancouver B.C. Canada
November 1971

at this early stage, video still has a hopeful aura about it, much like grass did in the early days. alternate networks and community-run media seem feasible, and self-awareness through intimate use of video is spreading. still, Crow Dog is insightfully aware of the eye behind the camera.



this directory has been started to facilitate the exchange of small-format video-tapes; that more people may gain confidence in their eye. I do not wish to become a bureaucratic central or distribution agent, for my time is devoted to my sculpture and work with VTR. exchange here means information sharing; people will have to contact each other directly.

everyone who sent in a card is receiving a copy of the directory. cards returned after printing will receive this edition and will be included in the winter issue. enclosed are two more cards, which we would ask you to pass on, or keep to update your listing.

although this directory is not available for the general public, it is going to get around. we suggest that you respond only to correspondence that interests you. if you have any ideas about exchange methods, compatibility, international standards, borders, etc., please write us so that we may pass it on in the next issue.

à bientôt,
Anne Goldberg
mike goldberg
intermedia

p.s. "Bottin" is French for directory. on a reçu peu de réponses de la francophonie; espérons que ça va s'épanouir.

with thanks to: The Donner Canadian Foundation
The Canada Council
Image Bank

03.01

VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY



358, Powell St.
Vancouver 4, B.C.
Canada

03.02

Conrad Atkinson	London W11, England	1/2" Akai portable	in combination with other techniques as both a socially "liquifying" mechanism & as a documentary mechanism (have used it most recently in "Art Spectrum" exhibition to describe & demonstrate the verbal, administrative & social structure of the show)
Pierre Bedard (Inter-Video)	Montreal, Que.	1"-2 VR 7900 2 Sony color cameras RHL sync. system	refund a \$75,000 investment & having fun making long feature films
Constance Beeson	Belvedere, Calif.	1/2"-porta packs -1 seg -1 3650 -1 5000A -adaptors -3 monitors	dancers' workshop, RSVP workshop, L. Halprin (educational art form)
Black Panther Party International Section	El Biar-Alger, Algeria	1/2"-Sony European system 625 lines 50HZ VCK 2400 Ace camera, DVK 2400 portable recorder CV 2100 Ace for playback and European monitor 1/2"-Sony American system 525 lines 60HZ AV3400 portable AVC3400 camera AV3650 monitor	used as a media tool in our Revolutionary Peoples' Communication Network. Shooting here in 3rd World and shown in American and European cities. Recording of social & political events, interviews, discussions, documentary of travels in socialist countries, environmental study & feedback, information communication and educational uses.

03.03

MATRIX
INTERNATIONAL VIDEO MEET
WILL TAKE PLACE IN
VANCOUVER
JANUARY 17-21, 1973

WE'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT ALTERNATE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS AND OUTLETS FOR VIDEO INFORMATION, AS WELL AS SOME OF THE BARRIERS TO INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE (CENSORSHIP, COPYRIGHT CUSTOMS, ETC.). PLEASE BRING ANY INFO. YOU HAVE ABOUT NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN VIDEO TECHNOLOGY. WE SHOULD ALSO LOOK AT CORPORATE MEDIA (BROADCAST T.V., CABLE, SATELLITES, DATA INFORMATION SYSTEMS SPACE AND "DEFENSE" RESEARCH CASSETTES CARTRIDGES, ETC.) AND WHAT DIRECTIONS WE SHOULD BE MOVING TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVES.

ADMISSION WILL BE A COPY OF YOUR FAVORITE OR MOST RECENT TAPE (1/2" HALF-HOUR), AND YOU WILL LEAVE WITH ANOTHER TAPE OF YOUR CHOICE. WE'D ALSO LIKE A COPY FOR OUR PUBLIC VIDEO LIBRARY.

FROM WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY AS WELL AS DISCUSSION THERE WILL BE SCREENINGS OF ALL THE TAPES SO THAT YOU CAN CHOOSE THE ONE YOU WANT US TO COPY FOR YOU.

WE NOW HAVE A SONY "EUROPEAN STANDARD" VTR WHICH WILL ENABLE US TO OPTICALLY TRANSFER TAPES FROM EUROPE, AUSTRALIA, ETC.

WE'RE WORKING ON WAYS TO SUBSIDIZE SOME FARES TO THE MATRIX GATHERING, BUT DO TRY TO ARRANGE YOUR OWN MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION. WE'LL LOOK AFTER LODGING AND NOURISHMENT WHILE YOU'RE IN VANCOUVER.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU THINK YOU CAN COME!

Irish Hardman

YES, I HOPE TO COME TO MATRIX

NAME _____
GROUP _____
ADDRESS _____

MATRIX
VIDEO EXCHANGE
358 POWELL
VANCOUVER 4, B.C.
CANADA
TEL. (604) 682-5621

04

VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY SATELLITE
358 POWELL, VANCOUVER 4 B.C., CANADA

WE NOW HAVE A SONY 1/2" EUROPEAN STANDARD VTR IN VANCOUVER, WITH WHICH WE SHALL BE DOING OPTICAL TRANSFERS (E.I.A.J. 400 C.I.R.). WE WILL TRANSFER TAPES FREE OF CHARGE FOR ANY NON-COMMERCIAL VIDEO PRODUCER, AND HOPE YOU WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS.

WE SHALL KEEP A COPY OF EVERY TAPE PASSING THROUGH, AND WILL FLOAT THEM AROUND UNLESS YOU INDICATE COPYRIGHT LIMITATIONS. ALL TAPES WILL BE KEPT IN A COMMUNITY VIDEO CASSETTE LIBRARY FOR LOCAL SHOWINGS.

WE HOPE THAT INTERNATIONAL VIDEO EXCHANGE WILL LEAD TO A MYRIAD OF COMMUNICATION LINKS AND SERVE TO ACCESS ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION. PERSONAL VIDEO CORRESPONDENCE IS NOW FREE OF DUTY IN CANADA.

ONCE YOU HAVE ARRANGED A TRANS-ATLANTIC EXCHANGE, SEND US THE TAPES YOU WANT TRANSFERRED.

GRACE À UN APPAREIL SONY (CV 2100 ACE) DE TYPE EUROPÉEN, IL EST MAINTENANT POSSIBLE, ICI À VANCOUVER, D'ENREGISTRER OPTIQUEMENT UNE BANDE EUROPÉENNE SUR UN APPAREIL AMÉRICAIN OU VICE-VERSA.

NOUS FERONS GRATUITEMENT LES TRANSFERTS À BUT NON-LUCRATIF. NOUS CONSERVERONS UNE COPIE DE CHAQUE BANDE QUI PASSERA DANS NOTRE CENTRE ET NOUS PERMETTRONS LA LIBRE CIRCULATION DE VOTRE INFORMATION À MOINS QUE VOUS POSIEZ DES LIMITES DE DROITS D'AUTEUR. LA SOMME DE TOUTES LES BANDES CONSTITUERA UNE VIDÉOTHÈQUE POUR LA COMMUNAUTÉ DE VANCOUVER.

NOUS VOULONS FACILITER L'ÉCHANGE VIDEO INTERNATIONAL COMME MOYEN DE COMMUNICATION ET D'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION ALTERNATIVE. ENTENDEZ-VOUS AVEC VOS CORRESPONDANTS ET FAITES NOUS PARVENIR LES RUBANS À TRANSFÉRER.

(AU CANADA, L'ÉCHANGE DE RUBANS PERSONNELS EST MAINTENANT EXEMPT DES FRAIS DE DUTY.)

05



THE VIDEO INN

THE VIDEO-INN IS A NON-PROFIT LIBRARY WITH AN INTERNATIONAL COLLECTION OF NON-COMMERCIAL VIDEO TAPES. THESE TAPES HAVE BEEN COLLECTED TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE TO COMMERCIAL TELEVISION, AND COVER A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS - EDUCATIONAL, ARTISTIC, WOMEN'S ISSUES, POLITICS, ETC.

AS A RESOURCE CENTER, THE INN ALSO HAS A CASSETTE PLAYER AND VIDEO-CASSETTES THAT MAY BE LOANED TO GROUPS. ON HAND WE HAVE A PRINT REFERENCE-LIBRARY CONTAINING A WIDE SELECTION OF MEDIA RELATED INFORMATION.

GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS ARE MOST WELCOME TO MAKE USE OF THE LIBRARY AND TO VIEW TAPES DURING OUR OPEN HRS. SEVEN DAYS A WEEK 11 AM-5 P.M. THE VIDEO-INN IS LOCATED AT 261 POWELL STREET (1 BLOCK EAST OF MAIN STREET) VANCOUVER B.C. TELEPHONE 688-4336 (68-VIDEO)

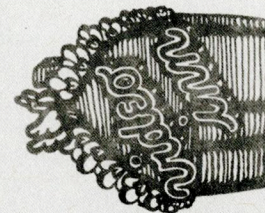
VIDEO INN CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

MAJOR CATEGORIES	S	U	B	H	E	A	D	I	N	G	S
0 -- AWARENESS	4) religious	5) sensory	6) sexual	7) growing up	8) drugs	9) intellectual					
1 -- HISTORY	4) biography	5) ethnic	6) political	7) business	8) labour	9) war					
2 -- LIFE STYLES	3) handicapped	4) women	5) men	6) gay	7) alternate	8) minorities	9) native people				
3 -- EDUCATION	4) alternate	5) adult	6) pre-school	7) primary	8) secondary	9) university					
4 -- POLITICS	4) community	5) regional	6) national	7) global	8) law	9) crime					
5 -- MEDIA	4) video	5) broadcast TV	6) films	7) radio	8) periodicals	9) books					
6 -- SURVIVAL	4) food	5) medicine	6) shelter	7) transportation	8) jobs	9) death					
7 -- SCIENCE	3) ecology	4) design	5) mathematics	6) physics	7) chemistry	8) bio-chemistry	9) zoology				
8 -- ART	4) abstract colour	5) abstract B&W	6) conceptual	7) photographic	8) crafts	9) ethnic					
9 -- PERFORMANCE	4) sports	5) music	6) dance	7) taped plays	8) poetry	9) video fiction					

IN ALL MAJOR CATEGORIES: 0) collections 1) theory 2) experimental

EXAMPLE: 07 is Awareness - growing up 61 is Survival - theory
54 is Media - video

Tapes are classified by subject area and by tape number. 07 -- 291 refers to the classification first and means it is our 291st. tape.



DEAR FOLKS

WE HAVE RECENTLY OPENED A COMMUNITY VIDEO CASSETTE LENDING-LIBRARY. THE VIDEO INN IS OUR WAY OF ACCESSING NON-COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE TO GROUPS IN OUR AREA THAT ARE NOT INTO VIDEO PRODUCTION, TO TRY TO GET SPECIFIC TAPES VIEWED BY PEOPLE WHO CAN USE THE INFORMATION, HAVE PARTICULAR INTERESTS OR NEEDS NOT SERVED BY BROADCAST TEE-VEE ARE ORGANIZING AROUND ISSUES, ETC. THIS VENTURE HAS LED US TO THE GENERAL QUESTION OF TAPE CATALOGUING, FIRST BROUGHT UP AT THE MATRIX GATHERING, LAST JANUARY IN VANCOUVER.

WE HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT VIDEO EXCHANGE WILL NOT HAPPEN UNTIL WE HAVE SOME WAY OF FINDING OUT WHAT TAPES ARE ON OTHER PEOPLE'S SHELVES; THEN WE MAY LOOK AT WAYS OF MOVING THEM AROUND. SO, WE WILL BE PRINTING A CANADIAN SOFTWARE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY THIS FALL, FREE FOR THOSE LISTED, \$2.00 FOR OTHERS (\$5.00 FOR INSTITUTIONS).

PLEASE MAKE COPIES OF THE FORM BELOW FOR EACH TAPE YOU WANT LISTED, AND SEND THEM TO US BY ~~NOVEMBER 31, 1973~~ DECEMBER 31, 1973. LIST ONLY THOSE TAPES WHICH ARE COMPLETED AND IN FAIRLY GOOD CONDITION, OR COMMENT ON THE TECHNICAL QUALITY IN THE "NOTES". YOU MAY INCLUDE SOME PHOTOS (2"x3" MAX.) IF YOU WISH.

YOU'RE TRULY,

Michael Goldberg

VIDEO
EXCHANGE
satellite

P.S. WE ARE LOOKING FOR PLACES ACROSS CANADA THAT WILL DUB TAPES FOR OTHER PRODUCERS, FREE OF CHARGE IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RIGHT TO KEEP A COPY OF THE SOFTWARE. CAN YOU HELP?

PLEASE PRINT - IN LETTER SIZES, CAP

TITLE	TELEPHONE (CODE)
PRODUCTEUR(S)	STANDARD
PRODUCER(S)	(88 CV, EIA, 1
ADDRESS	" 1/2, 1/4, 1"
	COLOUR <input type="checkbox"/> DUREE
	COULEUR <input type="checkbox"/> COULEUR <input type="checkbox"/> TIME
	CONTENTS
	USAGE POSSIBLE
	POSSIBLE USES
	PROITS D'AUTEUR <input type="checkbox"/> CIRCULATION LIBRE <input type="checkbox"/> OF LIMITATIONS
	COPY - RIGHTS
	NOTES
	PRIX - COST

Avry - vous accés à des renseignements pour copier des rubans?
Do you have access to dubbing facilities?

The Satellite Video Exchange Society

261 Powell Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6A 1G3 Tel. (604) 688-4336

HERE'S OUR FANCY NEW STATIONERY ... WE'VE BECOME A RECOGNIZED CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF ISSUING TAX DEDUCTIBLE RECEIPTS, THOUGH ALL WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO GET SO FAR ARE EQUIPMENT DONATIONS. WE HOPE IT WILL HELP WIDEN OUR FUNDING BASE SO WE CAN EASE OFF THE CANADA COUNCIL. SO - A NEW LOOK.

PLEASE MAKE A COPY OF THE ENCLOSED TAPE (IF YOU LIKE IT), AND DUB SOMETHING ELSE ON IT, THEN SEND IT TO SOMEONE ELSE (SOON!!). IT'S KIND OF LIKE A CHAIN-LETTER, AND WE HOPE IT'LL HELP PEOPLE REALIZE THAT VIDEO THROUGH THE MAILS IS A COMMUNICATIONS MEDIUM.

HOPE YOU ARE WELL, AND HAVE BEEN RECEIVING OUR SLOW TRICKLE OF CORRESPONDENCE IN SPITE OF THE MAIL STRIKE.

Michael

VIDEO INN LIBRARY
VIDEO EXCHANGE DIRECTORY
VIDEO EXCHANGE TAPE CATALOGUE



II
APPROACHED COUNCIL. ONLY THE CANADA COUNCIL HAS A MANDATE WHICH CAN SUPPORT MANY OF THESE GROUPS AND ARTISTS.

IT IS CLEAR THAT SUBSTANTIAL FUNDS WILL HAVE TO BE ALLOCATED TO MEET THE GROWING NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS IN THIS FIELD, AND THAT THIS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SPECIFIC EVALUATION PROGRAM. THIS PROGRAM SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE EMERGENCE OF VIDEO AS A FORM OF EXPRESSION, WITHOUT SOLELY REFERRING TO CRITERIA AND POINTS OF VIEW OF OTHER MEDIA (FILM, PAINTING, ETC.). ALL APPLICATIONS FOR VIDEO PROJECTS BEFORE THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE REFERRED TO A JURY COMPOSED OF PERSONS WORKING WITHIN EXISTING VIDEO ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS. TO ADMINISTER A PROGRAM SUCH AS THE ONE RECOMMENDED BELOW, IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE THAT A VIDEO OFFICER BE ADDED TO COUNCIL BEFORE 1975.

INTRODUCED IN 1966 AS A CONSUMER ITEM, VIDEO HAS QUICKLY BECOME ONE OF THE MOST WIDE-SPREAD AND POWERFUL MEDIUMS FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN CANADA. ALTHOUGH IT WAS DESIGNED FOR INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMERCIAL USE, CANADA HAS AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR CREATIVE EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION OF THIS MEDIUM (POSSIBLY DUE TO THE PARTICULAR DEMOGRAPHY OF OUR COUNTRY).

WITH EMERGING HARDWARE SYSTEMS (CASSETTES, CARTRIDGES, M.A.T.V., SATELLITE BROADCASTING, TWO-WAY CABLE, ETC.) AND COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT IN CONSUMER SOFTWARE, THE NATURE OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT WILL RAPIDLY EVOLVE IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS. THUS, WE SHOULD NOT RELATE TO VIDEO AS AN EXTENSION OF EITHER TELEVISION AS WE NOW KNOW IT, OR OF FILM. IT IS BECOMING A NEW CAUSAL FOR EXPRESSIVE IMAGERY AND EXPANDED PERCEPTIONS, REFLECTING A MULTITUDE OF NEW POINTS OF VIEW, SITUATIONS UNTO THEMSELVES, PEOPLE INTO THEMSELVES, ETC.. IN THIS CONTEXT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF CREATIVE CANADIAN EXPRESSION WITH SMALL-FORMAT VIDEO PROCESSES. THE ROLE OF THE CANADA COUNCIL SHOULD BE TO SUPPORT THE INNOVATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL THRUST IN THIS FIELD.

SMALL-FORMAT VIDEO IS BY NATURE A DECENTRALIZED MEDIUM, IN CONTRAST TO THE HIGHLY SPECIALIZED AND TECHNOLOGY-INTENSIVE BROADCAST MEDIUM. IT IS INEXPENSIVE, PORTABLE AND SIMPLE TO OPERATE, AND IS CAPABLE OF REACHING A WIDE AUDIENCE. VIDEO IS CHARACTERIZED BY INSTANTANEOUS FEEDBACK AT ALL PHASES OF PRODUCTION; WHICH HAS LED TO AN ETHIC OF SELF-EVALUATION AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. WITH PROPER FUNDING, VIDEO WILL BE INSTRUMENTAL IN PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP EXPRESSION ON A WIDE SPECTRUM.

AT PRESENT, VIDEO EXPLORATION IS AT A CRITICAL POINT IN CANADA. WITH FEW SOURCES OF FUNDS AVAILABLE, ONLY A FRACTION OF THE CREATIVE POTENTIAL OF THE MEDIUM AND PEOPLE WORKING WITH IT IS BEING REALIZED. EVEN WITHOUT AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF A PROGRAM FOR VIDEO FUNDING, THE "EXPLORATIONS" AND FILM SECTIONS OF COUNCIL HAVE RECEIVED TOO MANY VIDEO APPLICATIONS TO ADEQUATELY HANDLE THEM, AND NONE OF THE MAJOR VIDEO GROUPS HAVE YET

- 01 Information kit on Vidéographe / Vidéographe, 1972, [4 pp.]. Box V-006, file 104, Vidéographe inc. fonds, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montréal.
- 02 Sketch of the components of the "Éditomètre" / Vidéographe, c. 1972, [1 p.]. Box V-009, file no. 431, Vidéographe inc. fonds.
- 03 Information sheet on the "Éditomètre" / Vidéographe, c. 1972, [1 p.]. Box V-009, file no. 431, Vidéographe inc. fonds.
- 04 "Sélectovision: A Tool for Community Programming and a Broadcast Service for the Cable Subscriber" / Vidéographe, 1972, [3 pp.]. Box V-006, File 104, Vidéographe inc. fonds.
- 05 Catalogue of videotapes produced between 1971 and 1973 / Vidéographe, c. 1973, [approx. 200 pp. in a binder]. Vidéographe inc. fonds.
- 06 Map of Quebec with marked sections indicating the number of tapes distributed in each city / Vidéographe, 1973. Box V-006, no. 104, Vidéographe inc. fonds.
- 07 Summary report on Vidéographe with expenses for each year (1971-1975) / Vidéographe, 1975, [2 pp.]. Box V-05, file 104, Vidéographe inc. fonds.

vidéo

graphe

1604 Saint-Denis Montréal 129
Téléphone 842-9786

Le VIDEOGRAPHE est un organisme dont le but est de répandre et d'encourager l'utilisation du système magnétoscopique portatif demi-pouce (télévision en circuit fermé). Il se propose donc de promouvoir l'expression des citoyens, en mettant à la portée de tous les facilités électroniques susceptibles de véhiculer cette expression.

L'information recueillie par ce médium est sélectionnée, organisée et retranscrite sur des bandes d'une durée d'une demi-heure chacune. Ces bandes sont titrées et intégrées à une videothèque, sous le nom de VIDEOGRAMME.

Le VIDEOGRAPHE a mis sur pied un système permettant à la fois la PRODUCTION et la DIFFUSION des videogrammes produits dans ses cadres.

LA PRODUCTION DE VIDEOGRAMMES:

N'importe quel citoyen peut, sans aucune expérience préalable, soumettre au VIDEOGRAPHE, une idée de videogramme; la fiction le documentaire, l'information, aucune restriction ne limite les projets.

Un module d'animation a même été mis au point, permettant le type d'expérimentation image par image, cher à certains.

Un COMITE DE SELECTION se réunit chaque semaine pour prendre connaissance des projets reçus durant la semaine et discuter avec

01.01

LA DIFFUSION DES VIDEOGRAMMES:

A l'intérieur du VIDEOGRAPHE au 1604 de la rue Saint-Denis, un "videothèque" peut accueillir jusqu'à 115 spectateurs. Six écrans-témoins de 24 pouces, disposés en rond et sur pendus au centre du plafond permettent une disposition circulaire des sièges. Cette topographie encourage les échanges et discussions qui suivent chaque visionnement.

Les programmes, dont la présentation est gratuite, changent toutes les deux semaines environ et sont annoncés dans les grands quotidiens. Des affiches sont également placées dans les endroits stratégiques.

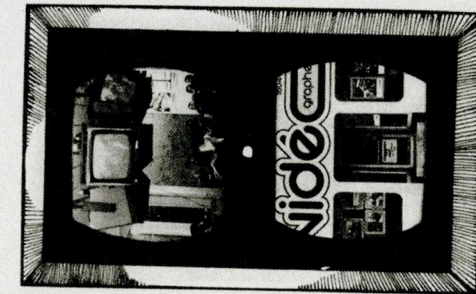
Le videogramme est ensuite intégré à la videothèque qui se trouve à l'entrée du local. Des isolaires de consultation, par le système de videocassette (sélectographie), sont mis à la disposition du public rendant ainsi les videogrammes accessibles en tout temps.

Le service de distribution permet à plus d'un millier de personnes dans les cégeps, universités, groupes de citoyens à travers le Québec et ailleurs, d'être au courant des nouveautés du VIDEOGRAPHE; des vidéos sont envoyées aux descriptions des productions, sont envoyées régulièrement à ceux qui en font la demande et peuvent être compilées dans un catalogue mobile qu'il est facile de mettre à jour.

Un service de copies en est la suite logique: c'est ainsi que les productions voyagent. En effet, n'importe qui peut envoyer un ruban magnétoscopique et demander la copie de son choix. Les frais postaux sont assumés par nous et la copie est envoyée à son destinataire qui peut en disposer à sa guise. Ce système a été un moyen excellent de se constituer une videothèque à portée de main, ensemble qui est appelé à s'accroître avec la révolution électronique.

Afin d'étendre davantage la communication par voie de videogrammes et satisfaire ainsi les buts fixés, le VIDEOGRAPHE, en collaboration avec les bureaux fixes, municipaux, a créé la SELECTION.

Cet événement, unique en son genre, est un service personnalisé d'émissions de télévision. Les abonnés d'un câble privé reçoivent par le courrier une liste des videogrammes et, durant certains jours, peuvent téléphoner aux studios de leur cabine et faire la demande d'un videogramme de leur choix.



leur auteur de l'opportunité d'une mise en production.

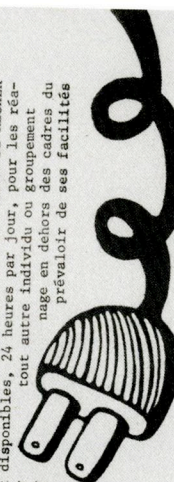
Durant l'année 1971-72, plus de 420 projets ont été soumis; sur ce nombre, 125 ont été placés en production. En décembre 1972, 60 videogrammes étaient déjà terminés et distribués.

Lorsqu'un projet est accepté le responsable et son équipe se voient octroyer un petit budget d'opération. Ils ne reçoivent aucun salaire, mais les dépenses encourues en cours de réalisation sont remboursées par le VIDEOGRAPHE. L'équipe est entièrement fournie et les conseils techniques accompagnent le tout.

La simplicité d'opération de ce genre de matériel, ne devrait écarter personne: deux jeunes garçons de dix ans ont déjà réalisés des videogrammes dans les cadres du VIDEOGRAPHE.

Lorsque le tournage des séquences est terminé, les bandes magnétoscopiques sont acheminées vers l'étape "MONTAGE".

Des "MODULES DE MONTAGE" mis au point par le "PROGRAMME DE RECHERCHE TECHNIQUE DU VIDEOGRAPHE" sont disponibles, 24 heures par jour, pour les réalisateurs d'abord, et ensuite pour tout autre individu ou groupe qui, bien avant d'avoir réalisé un tour de montage, désire quand même se prévaloir de ses facilités de montage.



C'est à l'étape-montage que le matériel enregistré lors du tournage est sélectionné, coupé et re-enregistré sur un ruban neuf. La forme définitive du videogramme est donnée au montage final qui est l'une des étapes les plus intéressantes du processus.

Le videogramme, dûment monté et titré, est ensuite sonorisé. Le VIDEOGRAPHE possède son propre studio de son où le réalisateur, là encore, est le principal manipulateur des appareils. Des conseils sont donnés au moment de la part des membres de l'équipe-cadre du VIDEOGRAPHE. Le point de référence est de rigueur. Les musiques d'accompagnement des documents sont toujours inédites et l'imagination est de rigueur.

01.02

01.03

L'éditomètre est une boîte de contrôle qui a pour fonction de synchroniser deux magnétoscopes tant en marche avant qu'arrière. Il permet ainsi un transfert en un point précis une fois que ce point de transfert a été localisé. L'utilisation de l'éditomètre n'est possible qu'avec les magnétoscopes SONY AV 3650 et SONY 8650.



WOMEN'S STUDIES MONTHLY 129

Représentant: Jean-Guy Désaulniers
tél. bur. (1-514) 842-9786
rés. (1-514) 482-9508

Tél. (1-514) 842-9786

community, otherwise we are left with the typical formula of the audience passively viewing the productions of "professionals".

It is easy for an audience to fall into this unless they are actively encouraged to produce on their own. The advantages are obvious for the cable operator and for the people, but it requires a long, patient educational and outreach effort toward the local residents to get them to put their rich and varied feelings into the form of videotape programming. If they see that it is in their interest to continue this activity, then "volunteerism" might very well become a sustaining resource.

So far, the results of the experiment have made it clear that there are people who will show themselves in order to do programming as a consequence of this kind of production technique. Since Selectivision there has been a large number of serious individuals and groups who have submitted proposals to the Selectivision component of B.R.N.O. in order to make tapes. An equally serious educational program to help them learn how to make tapes coupled with the educational forum provided by the Selectivision show, will continue to bring real community programming closer to reality, and avoid the possibility of "Selectivision" becoming a "video slot" technique. Perhaps one concrete direction in which to go this time is to take those anonymous voices on the phone and get them together, face-to-face at a meeting place.

Yolande Valiquette
Selectovision Coordinator
for BHMO, September 1972.

334 rue Emery
Montreal 129, Quebec
514-843-5159

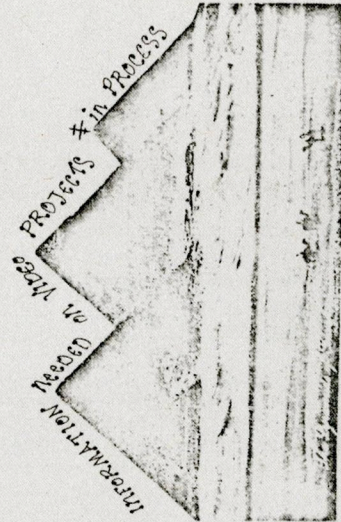
PSYCHEDELIC GENOCIDE

When the Indians discovered Columbus, they ran away in terror. The Taino people, an Arawakan tribe of the Caribbeans, thought the white sailors were *turay*, which in their language means "from heaven." Columbus himself, describing his first voyage, said of these Indians:

"As soon, however, as they see that all are safe and have laid aside all fear, they are very simple and honest, and exceedingly liberal with all they have: none of them refusing anything he may possess when he is asked for it, but on the contrary, inviting us to ask them. They exhibit great love towards all others in preference to themselves; they also gave objects of great value for trifles, and content themselves with very little or nothing in return."

in return." *in return.*"

In return for their loving kindness, Columbus claimed their homeland for Spain, advertised (falsely) that much gold was to be found there, mis-named the inhabitants "Indians," sent 500 of them as slaves to Spain, and forced the rest to work in mines and plantations — all on the basis of his claim that he had discovered the islands.



ERIC MEND
3931 WALNUT
KANSAAS CITY, MO. 64111

*a Tool for Community Programming
and a broadcast service for the Cable subscribers*

Early this fall, in the town of Belœil, Quebec, a pilot project was tested on cable system B.R.M.O. The project, called "Selectovision" was a joint collaboration of Green V. Videographe (the video workshop founded by the National Film Board of Canada) and Videotron, owner of B.R.M.O. and the National Selectovision is an experimental television service which gives the audience the ability to indicate their viewing preference from a list of 80 titles of videotapes produced by citizens of local and surrounding communities. This list of titles was prepared by the coordinator of the project, from the library of videotape, from the tapes of producers she found in the Quebec area, and from tapes which were submitted to her.

Copies of the list were distributed to the viewers of Videotron's B.H.M.O. system prior to the ten-day experiment. Those who wanted to indicate a choice were invited to call the station and speak to the on-air announcer. The callers' names were utilized in the experiment. The announcer received the calls, completed requests, and interviewed guests on channel 9, while the program began. Some 500 calls were received, and the program was on channel 11. The program began on September 22nd 1972 and continued, from 2 PM to 2 AM each day, until October 1st.

Aside from the obvious attempt to provide the viewers with a mechanism to indicate their programming preferences, the project also sought to demonstrate to the viewers how citizens like the project and to indicate the hope was that these production examples would stimulate the viewers in the audience to express themselves through the same medium. With further development the community could eventually feed their Selectavision catalogue from local productions of videascapes. This could be called the major aim of Selectavision.

SELECTORVISION.

There was also the consequence that carried further, such a technique could increase the utilization of the cable system by members of the community who either were poor users of the cable or were not connected at all.

STATISTICS

An average of 500 calls per day were recorded and at least two-thirds of the requests we met. Depending on the combined length of the requested tapes for a particular day, between 15 and 25 requests arrived every day. The number of requests ranged from 2 to 140 for a specific time. The announcer, who was keeping a running compilation of requests for a tape would show that tape which appeared to have the most demand on the next open spot in the program. Based on the concentration of calls, the best hours of participation appear to be between 6 and 11 PM, hours one would expect most people to be tuned to primetime shows.

CONCLUSION

The type of cable programming that Selectovision represents is often referred to as "community programming" presumably because on one hand it involves local people in the production itself, and on the other it reflects the software that people find important enough to produce. In the case of Selectovision the software came mostly from the library of Videograph. Such a library was generated over a long period of time by local people who were not involved in the production of the show, can use up tremendous amounts of programming and the temptation to "space out" is great. Libraries of programming generated by professional artists. For "community programming" to be truly such, a significant amount must come from the local people and to prime-time shows.

04.02

VIDÉOGRAPHE

SANS TITRE
Anne de Lorimier, 1972
8 minutes.

Le bruit que font les corps, laissés à eux-mêmes sur le dos des enfants, eux-mêmes pris dans des pièges de grands. Une illusion d'optique et d'accoustique réfléchi dans les yeux de ceux qui voient et dans les oreilles de ceux qui entendent. Mais qui faut-il croire? Ceux qui ont tout vu ou ceux qui ont tout entendu...

BSCQ-32855 pour tous



51

PICOTIN
Danyèle Patenaude et Roger Cantin, 1972
30 minutes.

Picotin a un âge qu'on n'a plus, vraiment. Picotin à un quotidien fait de famille et d'habitudes douces et de vacances, d'amis qu'il faut prendre le temps d'avoir et de promener tous les jours et de tout ce qui se passe dans son visage de Picotin en une journée. Du coke et des frits, les bigoudis de sa sœur, "j'ai dit pas de tirailage!", jouer au pire, au soldat, au hockey, à la mère et au père, à m'as-tu vu, à tout ce qu'il faut être pendant que tout le monde vous appelle encore Picotin, vraiment... Voulez-vous jouer?

BSCQ-32856 pour tous



52

METAMORPHOSES
Richard Martin, 1972
25 minutes.

Basée sur une expérience accoustique du compositeur ALVIN LUCIER, le document explore les phénomènes qui résultent de l'exagération des contrastes provoqués par des enregistrements successifs. Ce processus aboutit à une déformation progressive des images ou seuls les rythmes du premier montage subsistent.

BSCQ-32774 pour tous



53

SONS INTERIEURS
Richard Martin, 1972
30 minutes.

Expérience unique de prise de conscience des sons qui composent l'univers de chacun d'entre nous à l'aide d'une composition musicale adaptée pour le magnétoscope. Ces deux pièces expérimentales ont pour but de faire participer le spectateur, traditionnellement passif, à une expérience sensorielle unique en son genre.

BSCQ-32921 pour tous

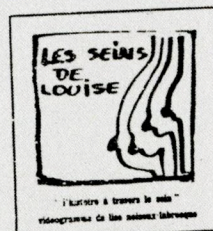


54

LES SEINS DE LOUISE
Lise Noisieux-Labrecque, 1972
47.15 minutes.

N'y croyez pas trop à ces seins. Ils sont beaux. C'aurait tout aussi bien pu être ses yeux, sa bouche ou sa façon de. C'est un morceau de sucre, un prétexte à un coup pour nous faire pénétrer, tout chaud tout peau, à l'intérieur d'une anatomie beaucoup plus globale de l'univers féminin, une fois débarrassé des scories mâles. Historiquement et génétiquement. C'est un manifeste pour la femme libérée du soutien-gorge, du soutien de famille et de tous les sous-produits de consommation créés de main d'homme. Mais reste que les seins de Louise c'aurait tout aussi bien pu être ses yeux ou sa bouche ou sa façon de.

BSCQ-32894 pour tous



55

vidéo graphie



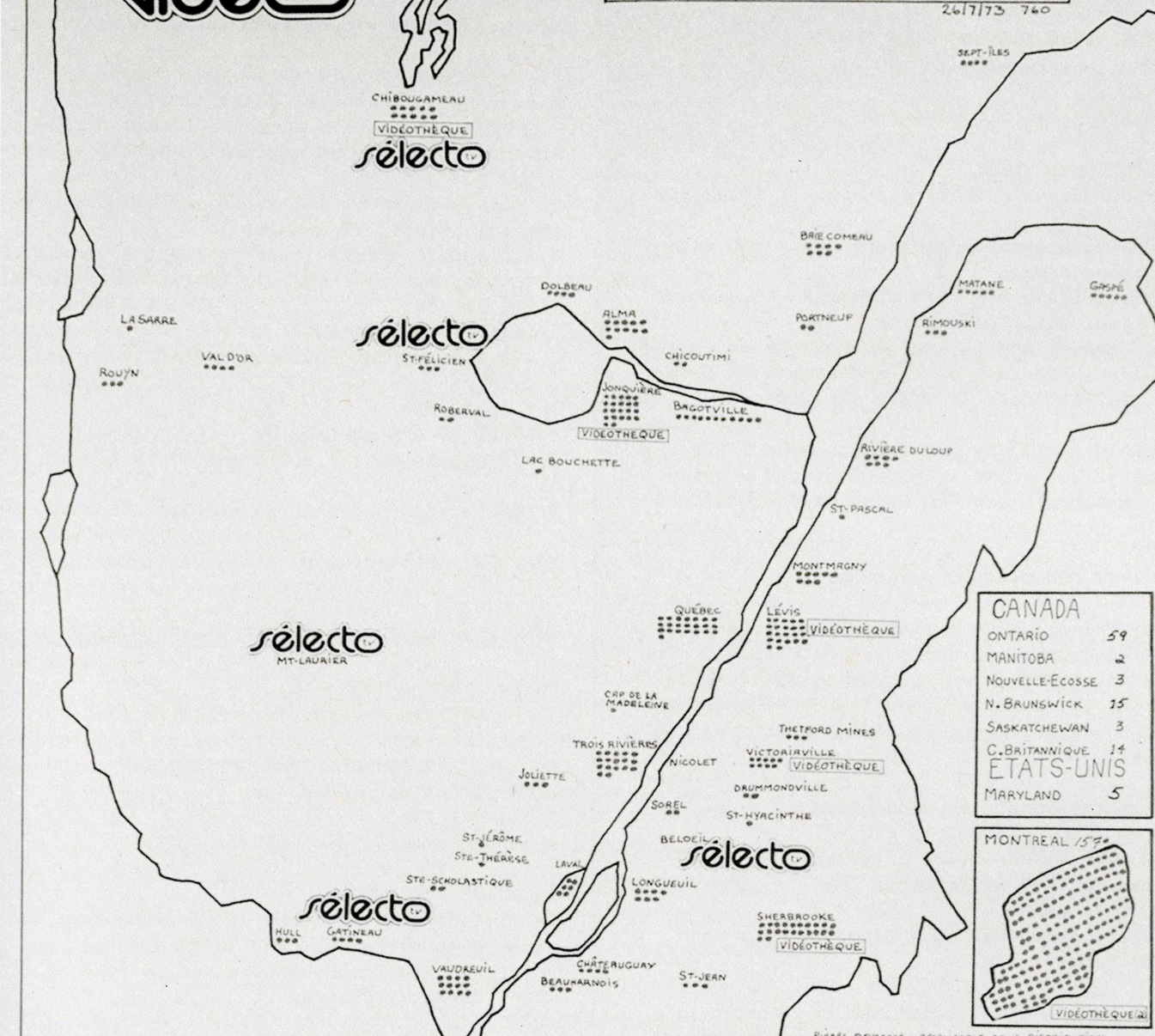
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vidéo graphie

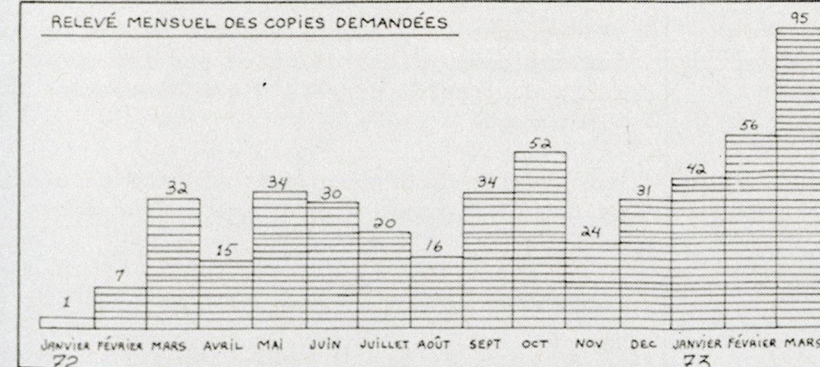


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LES SEINS DE LOUISE 10.	LES BELLES MINOUNES 10.
AMOURASSIS LE PETIT VILMEUX 11.	RÉACTION 26.23.
JE SUIS DE ST-SCHO... 11.	ZLOCZOW 11.
QU'EST CE QU'ON A FAIT... 12.	MASS-MÉDIA 20.
M. TOUT LE MONDE 11.	LES CLOCHARDS 12.
VIVE LES ANIMAUX 13.	IMPROVISION 13.

06

ANNEE FISCALE 1971

(1er juillet 1971 au 31 mars 1972)

Budget: \$123,130.00

Productions terminées: 12

Copies: 40

Spectateurs au vidéothéâtre: 2080

PREMIERE HYPOTHESE

Le Vidéographe est fondé sur une triple hypothèse:

- 1) des citoyens non-professionnels ont quelque chose à dire
- 2) ce qu'ils ont à dire intéresse un secteur important de la population
- 3) un médium audiovisuel économique et facile d'opération permet à ces intentions de devenir réalisations: le vidéo demi-pouce

Juin: le comité de programmation de l'ONF approuve le projet « Le Vidéographe » qui sera entrepris dans le cadre de Société Nouvelle

Juillet: embauche du personnel

Août: formation du comité de programmation du Vidéographe qui approuve les premiers projets de vidéogrammes. Le comité est composé de tout le personnel régulier du Vidéographe et d'un représentant de l'ONF (sans droit de veto)

Septembre: module de montage phase I

27 novembre: ouverture officielle du Vidéographe au 1604 Saint-Denis

Janvier: première copie demandée pour un vidéogramme

Février: première vidéofiche et premier catalogue; première vidéocassette pour visionnement des vidéogrammes

Fin-mars: module de montage phase II

ANNEE FISCALE 1972

(1er avril 1972 au 31 mars 1973)

Budget: \$269,429.00

Productions terminées: 58

Copies: 449

Spectateurs au vidéothéâtre: 11,339

8 au 15 avril: premier festival vidéo

Automne: module d'animation

22 sept au 1er oct:

premier sélecto TV à Beloeil

3,210 appels en dix jours pour 4,000 abonnés

10 au 19 nov:

sélecto TV à Gatineau

3,463 appels pour 5,000 abonnés

1er au 10 déc:

sélecto TV à Mont-Laurier

3,724 appels pour 1,600 abonnés

5 février: aménagement du studio de son

22-23-24 mars: premier stage de formation

ANNEE FISCALE 1973

(1er avril 1973 au 31 mars 1974)

Budget: 249,359.00

Productions terminées: 38

Copies: 1,235

Spectateurs au vidéothéâtre: 4,709

DEUXIEME HYPOTHESE

Le Vidéographe est agent de développement des média communautaires. Le Vidéographe est un volet du tryptique complété par Le Sono et TVC-4 de Saint-Jérôme.

9 avril: lettres patentes constituant les requérants en corporation sous le nom de Vidéographe Inc. selon la 3ième partie de la loi des compagnies; élection par les requérants du premier conseil d'administration du Vidéographe

Mai: remise de l'équipement à l'ONF et achat de nouvel équipement pour une valeur de \$50,000.00

Septembre: module de montage phase III

17 octobre: le premier est présenté à Sherbrooke

ANNEE FISCALE 1974

(1er avril 74 au 31 mars 75)

Budget: \$180,720.00

Productions terminées: 26

Copies: 748

Spectateurs au vidéothéâtre: 3,069

Automne: réaménagement du Vidéographe

Janvier: crystal de synchronisation (magnétoscope Sony AV-3400)

Février: contrôle manuel de la prise de son

Mars:

livraison de 25 éditomètres fabriqués par Automatec

Tournée de Jean-Guy Desaulniers et Christian Talbot dans différentes TVC

ANNEE FISCALE 1975

(1er avril au 8 décembre)

Budget: \$67,781.00

Productions terminées: 15

Copies: 359

Spectateurs au vidéothéâtre: 2,701

Juin: contrôle du vidéogain est fixé sur le magnétoscope Sony AV-3400

25 juillet: signature du contrat avec Cité électronique relativement à la vente exclusive de l'éditomètre pour le Québec

DOCUMENTARY
PROTOCOLS (1967-1975)

PROTOCOLS
DOCUMENTAIRES (1967-1975)

PROTOCOLS
DOCUMENTAIRES (1967-1975)

DOCUMENTARY
PROTOCOLS (1967-1975)

ESSAYS

PRIMARY INFORMATION

DAVID TOMAS

KRISTY A. HOLMES

ANNE BÉNICHOU

MARION FROGER

FELICITY TAYLER

THAT WAS THEN ...
THAT WAS NOW

Redistributing the Art Workers' Coalition

PRIMARY
INFORMATION

The Art Workers' Coalition originated when the artist Vassilakis Takis (with the help of a handful of other artists) protested against the policies of the Museum of Modern Art in New York by removing his sculpture from their 1968 exhibition *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age*. Takis was rightfully concerned with his ability to control the exhibition of his work after it had been sold: the museum, the purchaser, had shown his work against his wishes; it assumed that its right of ownership superseded his rights as an artist.

Throughout the early months of 1969, a group of artists, writers, and others from the creative community who were concerned with the issue, grew from a small number of members to hundreds. They called themselves the Art Workers' Coalition and drew up ten points to address with the MoMA. When officials at the institution wouldn't meet with them, the AWC held an Open Hearing at the School of the Visual Arts on April 10, 1969, which drew a huge crowd. Written statements were collected (some read aloud on that occasion), and the proceedings were later transcribed and published in book form by the AWC under the title *Open Hearing*.

About the same time, the AWC also published *Documents I*, a collection of letters, press clips, and so on, documenting its formation and its dialogue with the MoMA. Although *Documents I* is not comprehensive, it gathers together the correspondence between artists and the museum as well as the press notices that AWC protests received. It seems that at every protest, *The New York Times* was present to write about the event. Forty years later, the publication has become quite rare: when Primary Information decided to reissue it, we had only ever seen one copy, which was the one we used as source material for reprint.

Primary Information is a non-profit organization formed in 2006 to publish books and writings by artists. One of its principal objectives is to reissue lost or out-of-print works still vital to contemporary artistic practice. To this end, we have reprinted and distributed an anthology of *Real Life Magazine* (1979-1984), Something Else Press's Great Bear Pamphlet Series (1965-1967), and Allan Kaprow's *How to Make a Happening* (1968), among others. Over the course of two years, Primary Information has developed three strategies for the distribution of the material, all of which can be seen in our work with the publications from the Art Workers' Coalition.

Central to the development of artists' books since the 1960s is the idea of the publication as a platform that bypasses traditional exhibition space. The goal of this distribution (not conceptual or production)

approach has been to make the work more accessible and affordable. Dick Higgins's Something Else Press stands out as an important model and a significant influence on Primary Information's publishing philosophy.

Like Higgins, we are interested in publishing work by a diverse group of artists and from various time periods that we deem essential to contemporary discussions. We are not bound by aesthetics of form or content, and implied discussions among our publications are made apparent when our body of work is viewed as a whole.

However, since the Museum of Modern Art was the site where the Art Workers began their critical inquiry into the relationship between art, public policy, and artists' rights, we thought it best to start our program with an effort to trace the AWC's lineage. We had spoken of reprinting both *Open Hearing* and *Documents I* for over a year before we were approached by PSI to participate in its 2008 exhibition *That Was Then ... This Is Now*. The nature of our participation was left to us to determine, and we decided to focus on the Art Workers' Coalition, given the show's theme of activism, politics, and art from 1968 to 2008.

Primary Information thought of the exhibition as an open book: an opportunity for the publication of a large amount of material relating to the formation and activities of the AWC as well as the many splinter groups with which it comprised or aligned itself. We included flyers, texts, and re-recorded audio of the Open Hearing statements. Since the original recordings weren't available, we had contemporary artists and art workers anonymously record the statements, which were then played endlessly as an audio installation.

Most of the material in the exhibition came from the Political Art Documentation/Distribution Archive at the MoMA's library. PAD/D was founded by Lucy Lippard, one of the original AWC members, and contains political art ephemera from the late 1960s to 1990. Material was also collected from various institutions, private collectors, and individuals active in the AWC. We included, for instance, photographs by Jan van Raay, a photographer present at many of the protests. Most of the photos that we chose to exhibit feature actions or signs that we felt related to the current trend of pseudo-political contemporary art using signs and installations that take the look of protests without any issues or ideas to support the work. It seemed important in this case to demonstrate that the AWC protesters were serious artists who believed in something and would literally pour blood inside the museum to get their point across.

The fact that the Art Workers' Coalition began as a direct protest against the Museum of Modern Art was lost on the curators granting Primary Information permission to pursue our line of inquiry. As the exhibition drew near and the work of the AWC became more apparent to PSI's director, Alanna Heiss, Primary Information came under fire for allegedly trying to undermine the organization and its tenuous partnership with the MoMA.

Before the exhibition was confirmed, we submitted our material to PSI for review. We were told that the curatorial staff greeted it with excitement. When we met with Heiss weeks before the show to discuss our plans for installation, however, she referred to our conversation as a "pre-censorship" meeting. She asked us to remove material that donors might find offensive.

The AWC material is not inaccessible, but the contemporary art world does not seek it out, so its genesis is not widely known. If the AWC's history and the issues it addressed were to be part of a larger exhibition, there was institutional fear that rumors would deter potential MoMA donors who wouldn't want to be attacked in the same way the Rockefellers were attacked by the AWC. In the end, all material in the exhibition had to be approved by the director of the museum, Glenn Lowry. Fortunately nothing was "censored," and the show went up as planned.

Although the situation itself was neither extraordinary nor controversial, it does underline the enduring significance of the AWC's original purpose and the influence of the bureaucratic mechanisms of cultural institutions that may ultimately trump curatorial practice. Such influence was also evident in the 1960s when MoMA curators sought relationships and partnerships with the AWC, only to have their objectives denied by board members or other institutional representatives. Perhaps a better title for the PSI exhibition would have been *That Was Then ... That Is Now*.

The museum-as-distribution-site model for the show went as expected: those who visited saw the material, and those who were curious enough explored it. A takeaway newspaper that included essays by Lucy Lippard and Alex Gross, as well as a timeline of the AWC's actions, was given away in the thousands to visitors. As a site-specific work, the exhibition raised awareness with fleeting and, in a few cases, substantial effect.

As noted, the AWC produced two publications in the first six months of its activity. They were originally distributed free and with open

copyright for "other groups with goals similar to those of the AWC." They were printed cheaply (staple bound and with little or no design) and functioned as self-assessed public records. However, as time wore on, the titles became scarce, particularly *Documents 1*, and at the time of the PSI exhibition they had come to demand high prices on the secondary market – one of the few access points – as they had never been reprinted. As a result, very few people beyond wealthy collectors or researchers/students with access to specialized libraries were able to study the material. Although the publications had certainly been referred to in footnotes in a few anthologies, their contents had long been out of public reach.

To make the material available again, Primary Information produced facsimile editions. In order to do this, we secured a copy of each publication and persuaded a sympathetic collector to allow us to unbind them, not typically an easy task. Each page was scanned, and new digital documents were produced to print the 2008 editions.

One hundred copies of *Open Hearing* and *Documents 1* were thus on hand at the time of the exhibition and sold at cost. They were also distributed on a limited basis at Printed Matter and Specific Object in New York City and on request through our website.

Online distribution, or what we call automatic distribution, was the third method used to redistribute the Art Workers' Coalition's publications.¹ The open copyright on the material and the original intentions of its authors gave Primary Information an opportunity to make available free online downloadable PDFs. Until this point, Primary Information and our editors had worked only with copyrighted material, which required legal permissions from the authors or their estates and in some cases editors or their estates.

This third strategy proved to be the most successful in making available the documents from the AWC. The hundred copies of each publication took about six months to fully sell out, but each one has been downloaded from the Internet thousands of times (to be exact, *Open Hearing* has been downloaded sixteen hundred times and *Documents 1* more than four thousand times as of February 1, 2009); we expect this number to increase substantially over time. The works became accessible through the new form of distribution and thus became useful educational resources.

A curious paradox resides in the creation of the new versions – something like hitting Fast-forward and Rewind simultaneously.

Of course, this option is widely practiced at the moment, though typically without the consent of the copyright holders, through websites like Ubuweb, Pennsound, Greylodge, Mininova, and through exclusive peer-to-peer file-sharing networks like Karagarga or CinemaGrotesque, to name but a few.

The work had to be altered from the original format – actual printed matter, distributed by hand – to become virtual electronic files in order for its purpose to be appreciated the way it was historically intended – as documentation of the AWC's struggle for artists' rights at a specific moment in time. Fortunately the original format was itself not integral to the group's objective, which was simply information distribution. This is perhaps the most basic function that online distribution fulfills, and certainly its most successful.

To complement the reissue of *Open Hearing* and *Documents I*, Primary Information produced PDFs of Seth Siegelaub's *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement* (1971) in four languages. At the time of the Art Workers' Coalition's protests, Siegelaub developed, in consultation with a lawyer and more than five hundred artists, dealers, collectors, and curators, his contract to secure the rights of artists to profit from the sale of their work in the secondary art market. Although the contract was not a part of the AWC's activities, it was a possible means to protect artists' rights. Permission to reissue it was readily granted by Siegelaub.

Online distribution does not come without its problems: information may be incorrect or miscontextualized. Acknowledging this, Primary Information has taken a two-tier approach. We will continue to publish work as facsimile editions and, in an attempt to provide related background information, context, as well as critical foundation for its contents, we have begun commissioning essays and publishing online various timelines, interviews, and so on. When it is deemed necessary or appropriate, as in the case of the AWC or *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sales Agreement*, Primary Information will publish complete works online.

Primary Information sees itself as maximizing the possibilities inherent to both old and new distribution strategies. The Art Workers' Coalition has given our organization the chance to experiment and to reinvent and refine our distribution efforts; in the future we are certain that these methods will change yet again, in response to other creative opportunities.

**THE DILEMMA
OF CATEGORIES
AND THE OVER-
DETERMINATION
OF A BUSINESS
PRACTICE**

**N. E. Thing Co. at the National Gallery
of Canada, Ottawa, June 4 – July 6, 1969**

DAVID
TOMAS

¹ In addition to the N. E. Thing Co., the Baxters also founded a Cibachrome laboratory, N. E. Professional (Photographic Display Labs Ltd.) in 1974, ran a restaurant (Eye Scream Restaurant, 2043 West 4th Street, Vancouver) from 1977 to 1980, and founded a product/graphic design company (Sensitive Information Inc.), in 1987. Other artists who flirted with business models include Les Levine, John Latham and Barbara Steveni, and Bernar Venet. For an overview of the use of business models during the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Ken Allan, "Business Interests, 1969-71: N. E. Thing Co. Ltd., Les Levine, Bernar Venet and John Latham," *Parachute* 106 (April-June 2002): 106-22. For an analysis and critique of conceptual art's administrative aesthetic, see Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 105-43. For cursory discussions of the exhibition, see Ken Allan, "Business Interests," 107-108, and Nancy Shaw, "Expanded Consciousness and Company Types," in *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1991), 93-94. A short insightful discussion of the exhibition is provided in Derek Knight, "N. E. Thing Co: The Ubiquitous Concept," in *N. E. Thing Co: The Ubiquitous Concept* (Oakville: Oakville Galleries, 1995), 13-14. Douglas Ord refers to the exhibition in the context of the history of the National Gallery and the Lorne Building in *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003), 209-11. The exhibition is also discussed by Ingrid Baxter in a recent interview with Grant Arnold: <http://vancouverartinthesixties.com/interviews/ingrid-baxter>. Other writers have simply omitted the exhibition. Therefore, remarkably, there has been no in-depth analysis of this exhibition, notwithstanding its important place in the history of contemporary art in general or Canadian contemporary art in particular. In this paper I will be focusing on the *N. E. Thing Co. Environment*'s contradictory relationship with its host institution in order to isolate its unique qualities as exhibition and event.

A new and unusual exhibition titled *N. E. Thing Co. Environment* opened at the National Gallery of Canada at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 3, 1969. The exhibition's opening speeches set the stage for a month-long event that was without precedent in the history of Canadian art. The *N. E. Thing Co. Environment* transformed the ground floor of the National Gallery into a temporary corporate headquarters that introduced a form of organization into a national museum and generated a visual experience that blurred, in an unprecedented way, the boundaries between art and the larger Canadian economy. The complex nature of the visual experience that was produced was reflected in the opening speeches by the director of the gallery, Jean Sutherland Boggs, and the Honourable Ron Basford, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, which were more detailed and nuanced than those of Pierre Théberge, the assistant curator of Canadian art, and Iain Baxter, president of N. E. Thing Co. On the one hand, as the speeches noted, the exhibition staged a playful dialogue between previously antithetical systems. On the other hand, its visual irony and playfulness obscured some of its more disturbing and less obvious propositions. The company's adopted system of social organization and its references (as opposed to its modes of production and their products) also created a channel through which the artists' and spectators' desires, thoughts, and activities were articulated (in the case of the artist) and conditioned (in the spectators' case). While other artists engaged in business-like activities or made reference to them in their work, the N. E. Thing Co.'s range and depth of engagement was unprecedented.¹ In this article I will explore some of the implications of this extraordinary and, in many ways, extremely complex and *overdetermined* exhibition. I will, in particular, be exploring its framing by its host institution and opening speeches, its structure, and its performative rearticulation of institutional space in order to draw out some of its implicit historical and political implications.

I will be using the words "overdetermined" or "overdetermination" at key moments in this text to summarize the complex relationships that the *N. E. Thing Co. Environment* created between its multiple frames of reference and the historical context of its art practice. The concept of overdetermination was introduced into 1960s political and cultural theory by Louis Althusser, the French Marxist theorist, to take theoretical account of the multiple factors that could converge to produce an event and that defied any attempt to be reduced to or condensed into one essential cause. For Althusser, overdetermination refers to the multiple contradictions that could operate, at the same historical conjuncture, to produce a specific event: "If ... a vast accumulation of 'contradictions' comes into play *in the same court*,

some of which are radically heterogeneous – of different origins, different sense, different levels and points of application – but which nevertheless 'merge' into a ruptural unity, we can no longer talk of the sole, unique power of the general 'contradiction' ..."² Overdetermination captures the complex relationship that the *N. E. Thing Co. Environment* forged and projected – as corporate entity, conceptual and practical model for an artistic practice, and "total" environmental work of art – between the National Gallery of Canada, the economy, and avant-garde practices in the late 1960s.

N. E. THING CO.

The N. E. Thing Co. (NETCO) was founded in 1966 under the name of N. E. Baxter Thing Co. It had operated since late 1967 under the name N. E. Thing Co.; it was officially incorporated on the January 16, 1969, and dissolved in 1978.³ The National Gallery *Environment* was to be the most up-to-date and officially sanctioned manifestation of the kind of organization that Iain and Elaine (later known as Ingrid) Baxter envisaged as the medium to package and promote a new form of art experience and proposition conceived under the generic product definitions of "sensitivity information." For Baxter, "Visual Sensitivity Information" (VSI) was a generic term for "all art products." VSI allowed the user to "think in a totally new way about the history of art" by effectively eliminating historical periodization and its implied hierarchy between old and new art as well as traditional categories of practice. Instead, as Baxter claimed, "All artists, all painters and sculptors are simply 'visual-sensory informers': people who handle our world's information, putting it together in colours and shapes."⁴

Sensitivity information drew attention to the company's unique range of products, their close ties to the 1960s art world, and the preoccupations of a small group of artists who were trying to redefine the nature and functions of artwork. As openly proclaimed by its pun-based name, the company's business interests were remarkably wide-ranging, and its ambitions were practically limitless. However, its products remained ambiguous and oddly exclusive. They seemed to proclaim an allegiance to a company that bridged art, art history, and a ubiquitous world of consumer products whose primary symbol was plastic: that most modern and universal material. But their relationship to the world was publicly defined by NETCO's new esoteric information-based paradigm of knowledge production and sensory experience.⁵

² By this Althusser means that "... if the 'differences' that constitute each of the instances in play ... 'merge' into a real unity, they are not 'dissipated' as pure phenomena in the internal unity of simple contradiction." He continues: "The unity they constitute in this 'fusion' into a revolutionary rupture is constituted by their own essence and effectivity, by what they are, and according to the specific modalities of their action. In constituting this unity, they reconstitute and complete their basic animating unity, but at the same time they also bring out its nature: the 'contradiction' is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal conditions of existence, and even from the instances it governs; it is radically affected by them, determining, but also determined in one and the same movement, and determined by the various levels and instances of the social formation it animates; it might be called over-determined in its principle." Louis Althusser, in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Allen Lane, 1969), 100-101.

³ The notice of incorporation (Companies Act, No. 84030) described the N. E. Thing Co. Ltd. as (1) engaged in the production of sensitivity information, (2) as providing "consultation" and "evaluation" services "with respect to things," and (3) as engaging in the production, "manufacture, import, export," as well as the buying and selling "and otherwise" dealing "in things of all kinds." *The British Columbia Gazette*, January 30, 1969, 291.

⁴ Iain Baxter (N.E. Thing Co.), Vancouver, B.C. (from a taped interview, February 6, 1967), archived at http://www.ccca.ca/history/dorothy_cameron/english/baxter.html?languagePref=en&.

⁵ On the importance of plastic and the reasons for its use, see Iain Baxter, taped interview, February 6, 1967.

- 6 "A 'visual informer' is setting up a 'visual sensitivity information centre' on the main floor of the National Gallery from June 4 to July 6. In other words, Iain Baxter of Vancouver will be setting up *N. E. Thing Co. Environment*, a month-long series of events operating out of the National Gallery into Ottawa and its suburbs." See also the following quotation from Baxter in the same newsletter: "I think that we will run the *information centre* at the National Gallery on Greenwich mean time, to make people aware of the varying times around the world." *The National Gallery of Canada Newsletter*, May 27, 1969: 1, 2 (my emphasis). National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa, N. E. Thing Co. Environment June 4–July 6, 1969. N. E. Thing Company Exhibition. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives (hereafter referred to as Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives).
- 7 For references to display and demonstration areas, see Pierre Théberge, Memorandum to National Gallery + N. E. Thing Co., May 1969, and Théberge, Memorandum to H. Malcolmson, Pat Watson, Aubert Brilliant, D. Silcox, P. Dwyer, Patrick Lyndon, May 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. These references point to one of the *Environment's* interesting peculiarities: the containment within its space of sub- or satellite-spaces that would normally be of a temporary nature and exist in other locations (such as a trade show in the case of exhibition booths). Baxter would actively explore these parallel promotional environments by way of his participation in the 1970 International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition, Seattle Center, Seattle, Washington, June 23–26, 1970. In addition to a booth, NETCO also participated in a panel titled "The Human Element in the Information Processing Community." Iain Baxter fonds, gift of Iain Baxter, 2000. E. P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, box 2, file 20.
- 8 See, for example, Pierre Théberge's reference to Baxter's desire to transform the National Gallery's first floor "to resemble as closely as possible the offices and display areas of a big industrial corporation, the N. E. Thing Co." in his December 13, 1968, memorandum to Jean Boggs, director of the National Gallery. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.
- 9 *National Gallery of Canada Newsletter*, May 27, 1969: 1.

Moreover, the business model was ambiguous. The NETCO *Environment* at the National Gallery was conceived as a corporate environment, but it was also billed as a "visual sensitivity information centre."⁶ This ambiguity points to a confusion in the *Environment's* attributed functions. Was it an operating business or was it an environmental artwork? Could it have been a grotesquely oversized promotional/didactic booth of the kind that one might find in a trade show?⁷ Because the exhibition's organization embraced both functions simultaneously, it embodied a more complex environmental model than the one implied by the designation of corporate headquarters.⁸ The *Environment* seems to have operated more as a kind of meta-environment that encapsulated in a *total* fashion the nature, functions, and economic matrix of a business organization, its communications systems and promotional technologies. Finally, the *Environment* was also publicized in less challenging terms as a playful and ironic multifaceted artistic activity that exceeded its corporate and institutional boundaries. The National Gallery Newsletter of May 27 contains references to "demonstrations of plastic products," "movies," a "deep-frozen environment" with frozen sculptures in a series of freezers, ongoing telecopier works, "an ever-changing photographic exhibit," and the modification of a "plot of land."⁹ The range of listed activities mirrors the company's incorporated mandate to "manufacture, import, export," as well as to buy and sell "and otherwise" deal "in things of all kinds." It also introduces the reader to the Baxters' ambitions. While they were certainly in line with the professional aspirations of many other artists in the late 1960s, their adopted business model proposed a new frame of reference for the creation (manufacture), display (packaging), and reception (consumption) of artworks. In this sense a national museum was the perfect environment to present NETCO's ideas and products.

ACTS AND ARTS

One of the company's activities that also defined the particular nature of its *methodological practice* consisted of dividing the world, through acts of aesthetic judgment, into two basic categories of Visual Sensitivity Information (VSI): aesthetically claimed things (ACTs) and aesthetically rejected things (ARTs). Accession to each category was registered and certified by quasi-legal documents that reflected and supported the original acts of judgment. Thus, on the one hand, the word "Art" was transferred into the domain of the everyday through a deft play on its spelling that allowed it to conserve its original meaning while also signifying its diametrical opposite (aesthetically rejected

things), thereby paving the way for a different, yet traditionally/historically filiated, range of artworks and experiences. On the other hand, selected elements ("things") of the everyday world were adopted as artworks by means of a quasi-legal process of selection under the heading of ACT, or aesthetically claimed thing. ARTs and ACTs were therefore bound together in an uneasy tension and economy, supporting, yet contradicting each other's parameters and conditions of existence. Moreover, each ART and ACT actively promoted the question of what could and what could not be considered art while appearing to sponsor a new definition of the artist as corporate representative.¹⁰ If ARTs and ACTs functioned like the complementary elements of a Saussurian sign, whose arbitrary significance (word/concept) could only emerge in relation to a total system in which each element of the sign found its place and meaning, then they could only do so through the vested powers of a corporate signature that was legally and aesthetically guaranteed by individual knowledge and taste. These definitions and contradictions reflected the play of ambiguity that was one of the hallmarks of NETCO's corporate post-studio (art) practice.

ARTs and ACTs represented particular states of aesthetic invisibility/visibility with specific documentary attributes (authentication by way of standardized printed forms, company seals, labels, and official signatures that were ultimately legitimated by the N. E. Thing Co. name). While the play they initiated had its roots in a number of earlier works (such as Robert Morris's *Untitled [Statement of Aesthetic Withdrawal]* from 1963) that challenged, through legal procedures, the aesthetic status of the artwork, they adopted a slightly different strategy. Instead of appropriating a Duchampian strategy of circumventing the aesthetic judgment underlying the creation of an artwork through operations based on chance or through the adoption of a stance of aesthetic disinterestedness (readymade), and rather than of attempting to strategically stress or even opt out of the art world, the Baxters chose, in the ubiquitous and intangible spirit of the newly emerging age of knowledge production and management, to treat everything as information - the most radical, scientifically up-to-date and elementary attribute of all things and processes." In a gesture that was both an ironic comment on and a pragmatic recognition of the artist's future in this kind of society, they had chosen to legally incorporate themselves in order to function ideally, if not always in practice, through the concept of a corporate body and mind.

Information was not only a medium for the translation of invisibility into visibility in an emerging post-industrial service-oriented economy, but it was also the ultimate act of reduction, of democratic

10 For a discussion of the shifting definitions and social functions of the studio, the artwork, and the artist between the 1940s and 1970s, see Allan Kaprow, "Should the Artist Be a Man of the World," *Art News* 63, no. 6 (1964), republished as "The Artist as a Man of the World," in Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, expanded edition, 2003), 46–58; Caroline A. Jones *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Helen Molesworth, "Work Ethic," in *Work Ethic* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art/University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 25–51.

11 For an opposite claim, see Lucy Lippard, "Escape Attempts," in Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), ix. During her discussion of some of conceptual art's "sources," Lippard notes, "Duchampian 'claiming' ... was an occasional strategy: N. E. Thing Co. categorized its work as ACT (Aesthetically Claimed Things) or ART (Aesthetically Rejected Things)...." For another view on the influence of Duchamp on conceptual art, see Ursula Meyer, *Conceptual Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), ix–x. For Baxter's views on what he described as concept art about the time of the NETCO *Environment*, see a one-page exploration of its meaning from NETCO's viewpoint beginning with the following letter-based permutation:

c	o	n
coming	on	new
c	e	p
causes	effecting	profound
	energizing	perceptual
	equalling	pointed
t		
thinking		
thinking		
thinking		

Iain Baxter fonds, 1968. Iain Baxter fonds, gift of Iain Baxter, 2000. E. P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

12 For an example of Baxter's views on information, see the following statement from the February 6, 1967, taped interview:

The world is made up of pieces of information of all kinds, visual or sensory. A fork, a car, a door, a handle or a rock – all these things are information; and if you can get beyond the label-attitude, you are able to see and experience all they contain. The label is what gets in the way of experience. Because an object is labelled a "glass," people see simply g-l-a-s-s. They do not see all the intrinsic potentials of "glass-ness": how the glass is a bubble; how it's a container that captures space; how it's a clear window into some other little world. And then there's the whole other tactile experience, as well as the visual one, of drinking out of a variety of glasses: watching the fluid come up, sensing it flow into different kinds of shapes. People don't go off into these various realms of magic [sic] and empathy, pure form and surrealism, because labelling has become what their appreciation of life is. They have lost their innocent way of looking and feeling: and they start drilling it out of their kids at the age of six.

All artists, all painters and sculptors are simply "visual-sensory informers": people who handle [sic] our world's [sic] information, putting it together in colours and shapes. In the time we are coming to, "VSI display areas" will merchandise art, and traditional "galleries" will soon be thought of as storehouses for art history. The snobbery concept will disappear along with the pretentious price [sic] tag. Mass-produced art will be sold in stores and in drive-ins where people eat; and exhibitions from Tokyo to Los Angeles will be tuned in on T.V.

See also the statement "Thinking Re: Concepts, Art (if that's the proper word), Communications, Media, Anything," in the catalogue *Information*, ed. Kynaston L. McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 89–90.

levelling to a basic and common standard of equality. Information became, in a NETCO business-governed cosmology, an artistic lingua franca of the common man's claims to free access to the pleasures of creativity, personal expression, and appreciation.¹² If VSI served as the measure of the success of this form of democracy because of its capacity to encompass and treat everything on equal terms, ACTs and ARTs served as the measure of its failure to separate itself from a traditional system of art and the authority of the artist that it had cultivated, even if this authority was strategically subsumed by a company's economy and system of manufacture.

The successes and failures of NETCO's VSI-based strategies of democratic homogenization also applied to its engagement with a major national art institution. Insofar as the environment that the company produced on the first floor of the National Gallery of Canada was inspired by the layout of a traditional 1950s or '60s middle-sized company, it was a form that could easily be conceived as a statement of the possibilities of art to both comment on and integrate with a broader Canadian economy (at the level of a certain systems-based economic logic, if not completely in practice). But integration implied accommodation, which suggested that participation was acceptable. In this sense, the 1969 NETCO *Environment* is an extension, an apotheosis, and (paradoxically) an ironic commentary on the 1960s artistic strategies of blurring the boundaries between art and life. It achieved this unique position because of the way that it proposed (again with a heightened sense of irony in the figures of company president and vice-president, simulated corporate headquarters, a range of products, and company name) the integration of the artist with her or his society as a potentially responsible and socially productive economic agent. The irony, of course, resided in the simple fact that the whole exercise was a spectacular piece of theatre, a refined "happening" that was simultaneously anchored in the latest and most advanced artistic practices and in the material and symbolic trappings of a traditional corporate environment.

In a 1969–70 statement, NETCO presented its own vision of a business economy whose origins emerged directly from the art world and its culture, practices, modes of representation, and history. The model they proposed pivoted on the problem that artists faced of communicating ideas, and it focused on the very contemporary problem of information flow and storage. In a McLuhanesque statement, NETCO noted that there were "very few artists and critics concerned with this info-flow and mass communications ..." Besides NETCO, the list included Douglas Heubler, Joseph Kosuth, Stephen Kaltenbach, Seth

Siegelaub, and Lucy Lippard. "With these people, communications and info-flow are the medium of their work and the message. This coming-to-know come-unications, the N. E. Thing Co. predicts, will be the most important tool (electricity) since artists first used the phenomenon of photography to alter their point of view of reality."¹³ The statement went on to describe the kind of business model on which NETCO operated: "The N. E. Thing Co. ... was conceived as an operating structure in 1965–66 as a conceptual and business base so that it could operate both inside the art community and outside it.... [B]usiness is interested in pushing information around so that the keenest of its character, the practicality of its energy, results in profit and goods flow. This is what we call Practical Information. This is where the artist enters and with his sense of play and pureness of vision is able to take all this practical information and handle it sensitively and end up with Sensitivity Information (regardless of his sense of form)."¹⁴

NETCO refined its position in an important 1971 Position Statement that attempted to frame its activities in socio-political terms:

The role of the "ARTIST" in society today is constructed by a series of negative structures, i.e. financial, political and especially the connotations of the word *ARTIST* itself, which propels his position to the fringes of the sources of power and its servants, the media.

An artist in this marketplace environment relies ultimately on the charity of those who, for whatever psycho-socio reasons, wish to "support" the arts. It is essential to free the artist from these constraints, and allow the cultural knowledge he possesses to fuse with that of business, politics and education. Rejecting impotence and violence, it seems essential to develop a financial base, therefore the N. E. Thing Co. Ltd. is transitioning itself into a business organization operating within the current framework – to generate funds by legitimate, highly imaginative and profitable business activity, in areas like food, clothing, shelter, leisure and consultation, so as to support and accomplish the projects and concepts it wishes to conceive.

The object is not personal profit, but to develop a structure and method whereby products, functions and power can change directly the value systems of society.¹⁵

At the very moment when artists were beginning to explore unconventional or post-institutional forms for presenting their work (often

13 N. E. Thing Co., "Some Thoughts re: Communications and Concepts," in *You Are Now in the Middle of a N. E. Thing Co. Landscape: Works by Iain and Ingrid Baxter, 1965–1971* (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1993), 42.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., 43. This position was distilled in the NETCO term of GPG or Gross Public Good.

categorized under conceptual, performance or land art), or were exploring collaborative forms of producing art (Gilbert & George, Artist Placement Group), N. E. Thing Co. chose to attack the problem of art's complex and ambiguous avant-garde relationship with society and its capitalist, entrepreneurially based economy through playful and seductive strategies and elementary forms of mimicry.

The Baxters' company endorsed the artistic values and possibilities of a general business model and corporate structure of operations, and publicized and marketed these values directly or indirectly through its products. While a business model and practice were imported into the art world, company products were clearly conceived in relation to the recent history of contemporary art, with its melding of pop, post-pop, happenings, conceptual and cybernetic art, with an emerging social and political consciousness. It was in this rich and rapidly changing environment that NETCO began to produce post-pop art (inflatable landscapes, etc.) and quasi-documentary works (ACTs and ARTs) that were informed by the possibilities offered by the concept of information.

The concept of information allowed artists to effectively circumvent the question of the "correct," or historically sanctioned, medium that had dominated art up to the 1960s pop art movement, as well as the post-Duchampian question of what was, or what was not to be, considered "art" by simply dissolving questions through the application of a new and common definition for the "content" of a *work* of art. The concept of information promised to eliminate the need for inventing or developing visual or materially based counterstrategies under the auspices of succeeding stylistic movements that were more often than not authenticated by the label of the "avant-garde." In their place, it seemed to promote a common panhuman (even if distinctly *Western*) international and democratic frame of reference that was directly anchored in the most advanced theories of human and machine-based communication. "Information" also points beyond its more obvious communications and data transmission connotations to the world of computing technologies, their binary digital logic and beyond, to this logic's ability to represent the world's data content in elementary – 1/0, On/Off or True/False – bits of information.¹⁶ Information was therefore the product of a new model of how the world could be represented as a total system composed of interlocking intersystems with a common currency (bits and bytes) that no longer respected material or cultural boundaries. Its adoption by artists promoted the values of a global economy involving the exchange of data and ideas where the concept of medium could take on a different meaning and even eclipse the content it transmitted.

¹⁶ For an overview of information's impact on the art world of the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Eve Meltzer, "The Dream of the Information World," *Oxford Art Journal* 29, no. 1 (2006): 115–35.

The concept of information was also rooted in communications theory, with its focus on the status of the message and the question of its transmission and reception. This provided artists, including the Baxters, with a means to focus on the relationship between sender (artist), message (work), and receiver (spectator) in ways that circumvented the monopoly that the physical presence of the artwork had imposed on the artist's imagination through the discipline of manual skill and the specialisation of a traditional medium. It also created a new community of artists who spoke a common and up-to-date language.

Different definitions and approaches to information-based art emerged. One influential proposal, by the innovative New York dealer Seth Siegelaub, was to distinguish works on the basis of primary or secondary information – a division that took as its point of reference, not the material world of art objects, but their ubiquitous existence as reproductions in publications.¹⁷ Another interesting and potentially more nihilistic approach was promoted by Les Levine's concept of "social software," which focused on the impact and use of information to control social behaviour. Since art was also a form of social software, and the artist's function could be conceived in programmatic/behavioural terms, one could effectively discard traditional art practices and aesthetic objectives in favour of a direct engagement with broader and more pressing social/information-based issues. In both cases, the artist's new functions were defined by information analysis, management, and a deprogramming/reprogramming of social and artistic/aesthetic behaviour and experience since they could be understood in similar – informational – terms.¹⁸

Whereas Siegelaub proposed a binary distinction between primary and secondary information – or information that could only be understood in its own terms and information that served as a document, referent or container for an artwork that existed elsewhere – Levine proposes a socially oriented definition where "social software" referred to "... the kinds of information in the environment that makes us behave the way we do."¹⁹ For Levine, "Art now reads out as social software: information"; thus, "[o]nce we know that the purpose is to influence the social software, we can do away with art and start influencing the social software directly."²⁰

For artists who opted for the information paradigm, the communication (encoding/transmission/reception) of data could circumvent the necessity of using traditional forms of matter associated with the

¹⁷ Charles Harrison "On Exhibitions and the World at Large: Seth Siegelaub in Conversation with Charles Harrison," *Studio International* 178, no. 917 (December 1969): 202.

¹⁸ For a discussion of art, information and social software, see Les Levine, "The Information Fallout," in *Conceptual Decorative/Conceptuel décorative* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 8–23. Levine's essay was adapted from a paper produced for the exhibition catalogue *Recorded Activities*, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia. The exhibition was held between October 16 and November 19, 1970.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

fine arts as new systems and technologies for the exchange of ideas between artists and spectators were adopted. NETCO was at the forefront of these artists with its embrace of an information-based world view, its promotion of VSI and its derivatives, its use of another kind of binary – On/Off – logic in the form of ACTs/ARTs, and its utilization of new communications technologies such as the telex machine.

Insofar as information was a language for conceiving and producing artworks at the end of the 1960s, its use as a medium of conception and a kind of meta-material could guarantee that the boundaries of the art object and the art world would be eliminated in favour of more authentic, up-to-date, and potentially legitimate relationships with culture and society. Thus Baxter would reasonably and unapologetically declare in 1967 that “the world is made up of pieces of information of all kinds, visual or sensory.”²¹

Information was the N. E. Thing Co.’s primary “meta-substance” and the medium through which all its products were conceived to exist in new sensitized states of visibility since it was never a question of the material of which they were composed (with the possible exception of plastic, because of its industrial, economic, and cultural ubiquity as manufacturing and packaging material); it was, or it appeared to be, a question of the status of “things” conceived under the rubric of information and classified according to the artist’s aesthetic judgment.²²

Nomenclature such as Visual Sensitivity Information (VSI) and its derivatives broadcast NETCO’s allegiance to a group of art practices that were exploring and expanding the possibilities of art through the breakdown of its traditional categories and boundaries. If information provided the basic medium and logic for NETCO’s system of aesthetic judgment (ACT/ART), its hierarchic system of classification from Sensitivity Information to Experiential Sensitivity Information, etc., and the products that were categorized on their basis, then VSI repackaged art-related elements of the world for the consumption of a broad art-loving public.²³

The NETCO *Environment* was a paradigm of how new content and new media could be used to produce an ambitious environmental artwork that was rooted in the economic logic of an advanced late-capitalist Western society. But the exhibition also illustrates the complexity and paradoxes of an approach that took a corporate model as its organizational medium and its ideational matrix, as well as the model’s governing economic system as its primary reference.

21 Iain Baxter, taped interview, February 6, 1967.

22 See, for example, Baxter’s observation on the omnipresence of plastic, which extended to physically “protecting” information and thus ensuring its immaterial existence in much the same way that skin functions as a first boundary and layer of protection in the case of the mind, or a canvas or paper does for an idea: “Plastic is so widely used it wraps the electric age: al] [sic] that information running around the world through little plastic-coated wires! Plastic is the clothing of our time, not cold and sterile, but an extension of our “human-ness,” like a new skin, a membrane: warm to touch, laughing, shiny, happy.” Iain Baxter, taped interview, February 6, 1967. Plastic functioned, therefore, from the vantage point of its ubiquity and function of protective clothing as information’s material double.

23 For a complete lexicon based on Sensitivity Information and further details, see *Information* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 89–90.

ART AND LIFE I: STRUCTURE OF THE EXHIBITION

On December 13, 1968, Pierre Théberge sent a seven-page typewritten report to Director Jean Boggs describing the requirements for the NETCO *Environment*. The list provided a preliminary picture of the *Environment*’s physical identity, design, and components. Théberge noted in the report that “Baxter, as you already know, wants the first floor of the Gallery to be transformed in order to resemble as closely as possible the offices and display areas of a big industrial corporation, the N. E. Thing Co.” He also explained that “[t]he Slater Street side of the Gallery will consist of the offices of the N. E. Thing Co. with the president’s office and an area where secretaries will be working.” The latter area would include “all necessary office equipment, such as typewriters and a Xerox machine.” Théberge also indicated that the Slater Street side incorporated “an area closed to the public from which sounds of office machinery will be heard.” The small gallery on this side would be used “for showing slides and photographs; while the centre area of the first floor will be “used as a reception-lobby area.”²⁴ The report noted that the north side on Albert Street included another enclosed area “from which sounds of factory machinery will be heard.” The Albert Street gallery would “be used as a display area for larger works such as chain-link fence, carpenter’s wall and objects floating in a swimming pool....” With the exception of the display areas, the exhibition area could be modified by the addition of false ceilings “covered with a luxurious looking material, probably paper which would imitate oak panelling.” The Albert Street windows would “have display booths for small objects,” while the windows themselves as well as those on Elgin Street would “be covered with a bright orange paper leaving holes for the public to peep in.” Finally, Théberge noted that the whole of the first floor should be bathed in a “Musak [sic] type of music.”²⁵

In May 1969 Théberge wrote two other memoranda that provide late pictures of the forthcoming *Environment*. The designated areas and their proposed contents follow the earlier layout, and they bear witness, as in the case of the earlier note, to the project’s imposing ambitions. For example, in one memorandum, under item number 1, one finds “Office of the N. E. Thing Co.: Employees employed at various projects of comp: Research, paper work, xerox [sic], etc on slater [sic] St. side.” Number 9 lists “10 employees: Manager, Govt. affairs man, Pub. relations man, Secretaries, display receptionist, financial advisor, + Board of administrators.” Under number 15 one finds “Golf with the Prime Minister.”²⁶

24 Memorandum to Jean Boggs, NGC director, from Pierre Théberge, December 13, 1968, 1. Exhibition Files.

25 Ibid., 2.

26 Pierre Théberge to National Gallery + N. E. Thing Co., May 1969, and Pierre Théberge to H. Malcolmson et al. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. The idea of implicating the Prime Minister was pursued in a letter sent to the Prime Minister’s Office by Jean Boggs on April 18, 1969. Boggs received a negative reply on May 14. Jean Boggs to Gordon Gibson, executive assistant, Office of the Prime Minister, reply from Mrs. G. J. Cook, appointments secretary, May 14, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

The other memorandum lists "A proffessional [sic] window displayer," "Rent a billboard in Ottawa for the N. E. Thing "The Nat-Gall- a Subsidiary of the N. E. Thing Co." "Rent a Helicopter," "Get money for the collection (purchases)," and "A company safe + trophies [sic] won by employees like bowling tornament [sic]," "Degrees of the president," and "Projects: helicopter, canal, pence, in [sic] catalogue write + research future projects such as gigantic monuments for each province; telephone poles; monuments that can be seen only from an airplane." The list concludes with a voluminous list of proposed projects:

10,000 plastic leaves on a tree in Ottawa; plastic trees, chrome goac [sic] poles put all the chain-link provinces on parliament lawns and let the grass grow; or on a stadium; vinyl snow cap for a mountain; polyrethane [sic] snow drift [] vineyard stick sculpture; tents; newpounland [sic] gutter; a film of travelling across Canada pull [sic] lenght [sic] of trip, rent a pool where objects float; series of hose fountains; Drain pipes, rain gutter going around a house; vacuum formed murals; sign designs for sign companies; shadow sculptures; structures in river using flow of water; slide works; evaporating work. Re-Do "Bagged Place"; + Do "Ice Sculpture." – Use the roof of the National Art Centre.²⁷

The final layout of the N. E. Thing Co.'s headquarters followed the basic architecture of the Lorne Building and was consistent with Théberge's December 1968 description. Baxter's office was strategically situated, in corporate-culture style, at the intersection of Elgin and Slater Streets, whereas the factory or work area occupied the intersection of Elgin and Albert Streets. The offices, secretarial, gallery, analysis and production display, communication, and product demonstration areas were situated on either side of the company's lobby, which was interlocked with the National Gallery's main entrance. The company's operations were therefore basically inserted into the National Gallery's ground-floor layout. In this sense the NETCO *Environment* can also be viewed as a site-specific work that was integrated into the basic National Gallery ground-floor plan and that exploited some of its basic features (entrance, windows, etc.). In other words, as I have previously noted in the case of Baxter's company museum proposal, the *Environment* nested within the National Gallery so as to operate according to a *mise en abyme* logic with the building's original functions, thus challenging, if not completely circumventing, the National Gallery's customary functions. The *Environment* was therefore in a very special sense the pivot for a double *mise en abyme* of the building's history and architecture. If the *Environment* "performed" as a pivot, it is also important to point

27 Pierre Théberge to H. Malcolmson et al., Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

out that it *performed* its functions of "pivot" *eccentrically* – by simultaneously pivoting in two places at once, in tandem, and by means of a nested logic depending on whether one considered its (corporate) relationship to the Lorne Building or its (art exhibition/display) relationship to the National Gallery. From this viewpoint, one can argue that the NETCO *Environment* was an *overdetermined* product of its principal frame: the National Gallery of Canada. However, if one also takes account of a NETCO billboard project, noted in Théberge's memorandum of May 1969, which would have advertised the fact that the National Gallery was a NETCO subsidiary ("The Nat-Gall – a Subsidiary of the N. E. Thing Co."), the question of its overdetermination is also turned inside out since the billboard would have, perhaps only provisionally and momentarily in the eyes and minds of a spectator, reversed the institutional frame of reference and relationship between museum and exhibition. But its complex and contradictory character was not only the result of its nested logic or certain ironic publicity strategies. It can also be traced to other political and economic influences.

ART AND LIFE II: OPENING OF THE FIRST FESTIVAL OF THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE, OTTAWA

The *N. E. Thing Co. Environment* opening ceremony consisted of four short speeches that schematically introduced the audience to the novelty of the exhibition and to its curious position within a Canadian contemporary cultural landscape that ranged from the local to the national and from the architecturally proximate to the economically intangible.

The opening remarks by Boggs and Basford provided the most valuable insight into NETCO's curious and exclusive cultural position as represented by the National Gallery *Environment*. Instead of simply introducing the exhibition by placing it in the context of the Baxters' careers, and NETCO's position in the recent history of Canadian art, or instead of positioning the artists/company within an international contemporary art context, each presentation provided schematic details of the intricate relationship that seemed to exist between the NETCO *Environment*, the National Gallery of Canada, the capital city of Ottawa, and the larger Canadian economy. While the exhibition highlighted the challenging nature of the new Canadian art of the late 1960s through its choice of "artist" and "work of art," the presentations

28 On the use of puns as a strategy and visual tool, see Lucy Lippard, "You Are Now in the Middle of a Revisionist History of the N. E. Thing Co." in *You Are Now in the Middle of a N. E. Thing Co. Landscape*, 58: "Puns – visual and verbal – were NETCO's best tools."

29 "Opening Remarks," June 3, 1969, 5:45 p.m., p. 1. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

30 Ibid. The National Arts Centre was one of the key institutions created by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson as the principal Centennial project of the federal government. The building was designed by Fred Lebensold in the shape of a hexagon. Baxter was interested in building an open wooden structure in the form of a small house on its roof that would only be visible from the National Gallery's cafeteria. The structure clearly would have referred directly to his recent "Building Structure" environment at the Carmen Lamanna Gallery in Toronto. Although the project was unrealized, a similar structure was constructed in the National Gallery auditorium, on June 26, as a performance/theatre work titled *Building Structure – Theatre, Building Structure – Dance, Building Structure – Musical*. From documentary photographic evidence it appears to have also been exhibited in one of the National Gallery's second-floor exhibition spaces and as an object in the Thing Dept. section of the *Environment*. See *Report on the Activities of the N. E. Thing Co. of North Vancouver, British Columbia, at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and Other Locations, June 4–July 6, 1969* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971).

31 Pierre Théberge to Iain Baxter, March 1, 1968. See also a letter from Jean Boggs to Gordon Gibson, executive assistant, Office of the Prime Minister, dated April 18, 1969, the opening lines of which read, "To correspond to the opening and first festival of the National Arts Centre, the National Gallery is having an exhibition of the work of one of Canada's most theatrical young artists, Iain Baxter" (my emphasis). She went on to add the following interesting qualification, "It is a serious exhibition on our part with a catalogue by our Assistant Curator of Canadian Art, Pierre Théberge." Boggs's qualification suggests that theatricality and seriousness might not have been compatible characteristics in the visual arts, a comment that raises many interesting questions concerning the nature of the works produced in the late 1960s and their public reception. I will return to this aspect of the exhibition and its possible implications later.

provided a distinctly institutional and economic perspective on the National Gallery's choice of NETCO and the exhibition's dates of presentation. The exact nature and function of this alternative frame of reference is important, given the rampant countercultural/anti-authoritarian mood of the late 1960s and NETCO's "corporate" stance. Minimally, it exposes the company's latent and contradictory – anti- and pro-institutional filiations – relations that existed in spite of – or behind – its publicly flaunted image of artistic/economic ingenuity that was packaged in a light-hearted, pun-based irony and playfulness.²⁸

Jean Boggs's remarks included two interesting observations about the new NETCO *Environment*. Describing the transformation of the National Gallery's ground floor as a success, she added, however, that it made her "feel vaguely uneasy, since this building, the Lorne Building, which was constructed as an office block, is a little too much like a factory anyway, particularly compared with our handsome new neighbour across the street."²⁹ The distinction between the Lorne Building's original use, its existing cultural function and status, and an unidentified new "neighbour" introduced a moment of uncertainty in Boggs's speech that was immediately neutralized by a startling admission: "Our handsome new neighbour ... is in any case the reason for this exhibition." She continued, "In order to celebrate the opening of the National Art Centre and to complement its first festival with its emphasis on Canadian performers, we decided to have an exhibition of a young Canadian artist, whose works share many of the characteristics of the theatre and are sufficiently lighthearted to be a joyous tribute from the visual arts to the National Art Centre. Our natural and I think inevitable choice was Iain Baxter, or as he prefers to be known, the N. E. Thing Co. of Vancouver."³⁰

Since the National Arts Centre officially opened on June 2, a day before the NETCO *Environment's* opening, the proximity of the events was not, as Boggs's remarks clearly reveal, a coincidence. It was not only a calculated political and cultural event, it was also predicated on a specific, desirable, and, one might add, actively encouraged (in the sense of chosen and supported) if not explicitly *commissioned* characteristic of the environment, namely, its *theatricality*. This reading is supported by information contained in a March 1, 1968, letter from Pierre Théberge to Baxter in which he confirms a date for the exhibition (May 30–July 6, 1969), its extent ("the *whole* floor" [emphasis in the original]), its coincidence with the "opening of the National Art Centre ..., and, therefore, the environment should be as theatrical as possible" (my emphasis).³¹ With the increased exploration of interdisciplinary practices by

32 See, for example, *9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering*, 1966. The event was organized by Billy Klüver, Fred Waldhauer, and Robert Rauschenberg and was presented during nine evenings in the 69th Regiment Armory, New York; *9 Evenings* featured works by John Cage, Lucinda Childs, Öyvind Fahlström, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg, David Tudor, and Robert Whitman that had been produced in collaboration with scientists and engineers from Bell Labs. For an overview of the event, see *9 Evenings Reconsidered: Art, Theatre, and Engineering, 1966* (Cambridge, Mass: List Visual Arts Center, MIT, 2006).

33 One thinks, in particular, of Les Levine's *Museum of Mott Art Catalogue of Services* (New York: Museum of Mott Art, 1971) or his *Museum of Mott Art Inc. Catalogue of After Art Services 1974/After Art: Museum of Mott Art Inc.* (New York: Museum of Mott Art, 1974), or the Artist Placement Group's attempts to reposition the artist in society through their introduction as productive agents in industry and government agencies. See the Tate Gallery website resource based on the APG records that the Tate acquired in 2004: <http://www.tate.org.uk/learning/artistsinfocus/apg/>.

visual and performing artists in the mid to late 1960s, references to other cultural practices were not unusual at the time. "Avant-gardism" in the visual arts of the 1960s extended to collaborative projects between cultural domains, and it openly embraced theatricality as a viable and progressive strategy to combat, or to serve as the most direct antidote to, the stringent and introverted formalism most often associated with the New York school of painting and Greenbergian Formalism.³² The desire to reach beyond the art world was also very much in the air in the late 1960s, as is suggested by Boggs's and Théberge's comments, NETCO's corporate model and business practices, and as works by Les Levine or the Artist Placement Group of London, U.K., and others clearly demonstrate.³³

However, it is interesting to note that the choice of NETCO and the presentation of its *Environment* were predicated on its potential *theatricality* (as opposed to another trait such as its corporate-based novelty or its specific brand of information-based conceptualism) and that this choice was in a very direct sense determined by the National Arts Centre's performing arts mandate and its new building and not vice versa (such as the Lorne Building's original function). In other words, Boggs's and Théberge's remarks clearly suggest that the institutional frame of reference for the exhibition was theatricality and that NETCO's choice was therefore regulated by practices associated with the performing arts. These comments provide an unusual and rare insight into the institutional politics that can govern the selection of an artist and the timing of an exhibition even at a time of considerable liberalism of thought and independence of action. Given information's ephemeral and quixotic nature, as well as its invisibility and ubiquity, one could easily forget that information was also created, governed, and managed by those in command of the media and technologies of communication through which it circulated. This is also the case with NETCO, since it might have controlled the information content of its products, but not necessarily the context in which they were presented. The *overdetermination* of the NETCO *Environment* – elements of which can be traced to its eccentric relationship to the National Gallery's function and site – can also be measured by its connections with the local politics and culture of Canada's capital city, and through this to a broader Canadian economy.

The opening remarks by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs provide another interesting perspective on the exhibition's potential role as an *economic* interface between the *Environment*, specifically its basic corporate model and public stance, and a larger Canadian economy. After a few introductory words by Pierre Théberge,

Jean Boggs introduced Ron Basford as "an appropriate person to associate with the most adventurous trend in contemporary art."³⁴ She continued, "We have used the Hon. Mr. Basford's only predecessor to open such an exhibition. In this case we also have other reasons. We felt that the Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs would have a particular interest in the commodities of the N. E. Thing Co., but our real reason is that Mr. Basford is like Mr. Baxter, from British Columbia and Vancouver, and that the work of Iain Baxter plays some sort of role in his life. Mrs. Basford who was with him this afternoon has an 'Iain Baxter' hanging around her neck."³⁵

The irony and playfulness of this introduction – with its references to the new kinds of commodities on display in the gallery (and hanging around Mrs. Basford's neck) – were echoed in the minister's speech. After noting the geographical filiation between himself, Baxter, and his family, and the visibility that the exhibition provided for British Columbia and Vancouver, Basford went on to joke, "I have just gotten off the plane from Toronto where I was giving an address to the Canadian Manufacturers Association. I regret, Iain that you didn't appear to be represented there and it may do the Canadian Manufacturers Association a lot of good if you were." The rest of the speech is worth reproducing, not only because of its humorous – and disarming – tone but also for the way it reveals the level of success that NETCO had achieved in promoting its populist and ironic approach to the economic packaging and presentation of the contemporary artist and his/her products.

But many of my responsibilities as minister involve the relation which exists between the corporation and the consumer and it seems to me that Mr. Baxter and the N. E. Thing Co. are exploring this relationship with humour and with imagination. The fact that he has incorporated himself to do this simply underlines the fact that Iain Baxter is determined to take the artist out of isolation and put him right in the thick of our present day environment. However, in the National Gallery's brochure [*sic*], which I suppose we had better call a Report to the Shareholders, which I have referred to my officials to determine that it complies with our recent amendments to the Canada Corporations Act and it appears to me that the major products produced by this company is visual sensitivity or new ways of looking at familiar subjects.³⁶

The three key ideas that Basford focuses on are "the relation which exists between the corporation and the consumer," "the fact that Iain Baxter is determined to take the artist out of isolation and put him

right in the thick of our present day environment," and "that the major products [*sic*] produced by this company is visual sensitivity or new ways of looking at familiar subjects." Each of these ideas promotes a vision of the successful (*productive*) integration of the artist in society, as well as sustaining the conventional vision of the artist as an original kind of perceptual researcher. Successful integration is linked primarily, but not exclusively, to socio-visual intelligibility, clearly defined social/functional integration, and the fact that an artist's activity is not *counter-productive* (abusive and aggressive, intellectually complex, or conceptually alien in form) but, on the contrary, that it should (eventually) have a *positive* economic exchange value. Successful integration also suggests that the artist is functioning according to well-defined, socially sanctioned rules (the regulatory powers of the Canada Corporations Act). For Basford, not surprisingly, these rules were rooted in consumerism and were therefore capitalist in nature. The reference to the Canada Corporations Act was pertinent and significant, not only from Basford's viewpoint but also from the perspective of an artist-entrepreneur whose business practice was designed to socially and economically reintegrate the artist into a late-1960s culture as a productive member of society.

It is hardly surprising that Basford would also focus on the Baxter works that he had in his home: a "still life with ironing board and bottle" and *Bag Rocks* ("three rocks packed in a plastic bag"). He described their special qualities and the new vistas that the odd juxtaposition of household objects created, as well as the dangers associated with the unusual placement of *Bag Rocks* (it was hung over "or in the kitchen door"). He then briefly highlighted the artist's multi-disciplinarity before declaring "the temporary Ottawa headquarters for the N. E. Thing Co. open for business."³⁷

The speech is, as I have suggested, interesting for a number of reasons, but the principal one is the way that Basford framed and articulated the novelty of the perceptual experience generated by NETCO and its products. His comments appeared to be a natural extension of his official responsibilities as Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the special character of the exhibition. But his official presence in the context of the NETCO *Environment* promoted a *working* interface between the worlds of business and art, the economy and culture, and this interface was not neutral. There was no commentary on the environment's conceptual originality (VSI), its challenges, or the unusual and dissonant experiential qualities it created, given its museum context. The economy and the production and consumption of goods were presented as natural

34 "Opening Remarks," June 3, 1969, 5:45 p.m., "3. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. Vancouver-based Stanley Ronald Basford (1932–2005) was a minister in Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government. A native of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Basford was first elected to the House of Commons in 1963 and was re-elected in 1965, 1968, 1972, and 1974. He was appointed Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in 1968, and he retired from the cabinet in 1978, after also serving as Minister of Urban Affairs (1972–1974), Minister of National Revenue (1974–1975), Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada (1975–1978). He also held the post of acting Solicitor General of Canada between January and February 1978.

35 Jean Boggs, "Opening Remarks," June 3, 1969, 5:45 p.m., "3.

36 Ron Basford, "Opening Remarks," 3–4.

37 Ibid., 4, 5.

extensions for the development of contemporary art of the late 1960s. The importance of this assumption, which was not at all obvious at the time, given the political and social unrest that ebbed and flowed through various international countercultural movements (including those in Canada), becomes clear when one realizes that these are the same assumptions that have become increasingly important in the decades following the exhibition. With this in mind, the exhibition can be treated as a singular pivot between different vocational/avant-garde and professional/corporate models of the artist and artwork in Canada. But what exactly is the meaning of a "working interface" when treated in such terms, and what light can its meaning shed on the post-1960s transformations in the artist's role and functions when he or she is considered a "responsible" member of society?

The NETCO *Environment* exhibition file at the National Gallery of Canada contains another version of Basford's speech that further illuminates the nature of this interface.³⁸ This version contains the following observations:

Contemporary artists are continuously in the process of re-defining what is art, by their involvement with objects and situations that are new and unfamiliar to most people. At the same time they challenge our own concepts and ideas about what a work of art is and what is [sic] should be.

Iain Baxter, the president of the N. E. Thing Company is placing this challenge and working toward arriving at these new definitions in a humorous and imaginative way. In a sense he is telling us to look around us and to try to find what can be enjoyed in the things that surround us, the situations we are involved in daily.

The formation of the N. E. Thing Company is also pointing out that the artist, in today's society, is a producer of goods and that we the public, the collectors and the institutions are the consumers of their works. The statutes of his company are very broad, as it is authorized to "produce, manufacture, import, export, buy, sell and otherwise deal in things of all kinds."

I am told that other artists from other regions in Canada have also incorporated themselves. I do not know if it is a trend of the future, but I feel it is perhaps a sign of a better financial situation for the artist as well as the recognition that there is in Canada a market for works of art, that may expand rapidly.³⁹

38 This version does not have a title, date, or time, which suggests that this was not an official version but a draft.

39 Untitled three-page text, 1. Exhibition Files - Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. The opening remarks contain conventional ideas about the artist and artwork's social functions.

40 For a contrasting view, see Seth Seigelaub's astute analysis of the economic- and market-based differences between the art producing context of the 1960s and 1990s in "The Why and What of THE CONTEXT OF ART/THE ART OF CONTEXT Project: Past, Present And Future," in *The Context of Art/The Art of Context*, eds. Seth Seigelaub, Marion Fricke, and Roswitha Fricke (Trieste: Navado Press, 2004), 25-28.

41 For example, during a closed conference held on June 9, Iain Baxter noted, "I think one of the other facts that maybe tangential is that artist[s] are looking for other ways of making more money." Visual Sensitivity Information, Communications and Ramifications, tape no. 1. Exhibition Files - Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. NETCO's corporate stance and ambitions were constrained by its family business model and its small-scale manufacturing culture. Moreover, the actual vision of what the company was producing on the basis of its stated field of VSI research and product manufacture remained suitably ambiguous precisely because of the way that it was caught between artistic vanguardism, commercialism, populism, and popism.

42 Iain Baxter, taped interview, February 6, 1967. It is important to note that the Baxters were interested in not only selling objects but also in circulating ideas and perceptual consciousness, as their use of Telex or their product-based materialization of VSI suggest. However, the activities were invariably framed by NETCO and its business culture and ethos.

43 See, for example, the following remarks from the exhibition's comment book from June 10: "The president and family are great - Cumulus in Tartan is a gas - Q.E.D., the philosophy of the whole thing (N. E. Thing) is a gas," or "Genesis I revised: in the beginning God created the N. E. Thing Co. Baxter did the rest." On June 11, someone wrote, "Will N. E. Thing do N. E. Thing of great portent or will N. E. Thing come of N. E. Thing?" Another person proposed, "N. E. Thing you can do, I can do better. I can do N. E. Thing better than you!" June 15 and June 20 contained the following comments: "Obviously N. E. Thing goes!" and "N. E. Thing is for the birds who see (?)" Guest Book, 5, 6, 8, 11. Exhibition Files - Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

Notwithstanding its ceremonial function and lighthearted tone, this version of Basford's speech takes note of a pre-existing economic situation (the apparent lack of a well-developed Canadian art market) while also promoting a socially productive model of the kind of artist who could overcome this deficiency. The artist endorsed is one who produces "new definitions in a humorous and imaginative way"; "is a producer of goods ..."; and who can be successfully integrated into society because "there is in Canada a market for works of art that may expand rapidly." Basford's model is economically based on the production and consumption of *goods*. It clearly proposes a blueprint - a business model - for the economic integration of the artist as a productive member of society. It is clear from Basford's comments that the model is represented (albeit in a lighthearted and playful manner) in the activities of NETCO and the June 1969 *Environment*.

The character of late-1960s art - its content, particular form, and attributed categories (minimalism, Arte Povera, land art, anti-form, process art, dematerialized or conceptual art, etc.) - was not raised or questioned in Basford's speech, even though it was being constantly challenged and extended at the time. Instead, he highlighted the important characteristics of an art market economy as opposed to, for example, to an economy of ideas and content.⁴⁰ Although the NETCO *Environment* was presented as a vanguard experience whose objective was to promote and package new ways of seeing and experiencing the world, the Baxters were clearly not indisposed to the whole question of the artist's integration into the economy.⁴¹ As Baxter had already declared in 1967, "In the time we are coming to, 'VSI display areas' will merchandise art, and traditional 'galleries' will soon be thought of as storehouses for art history. The snobbery concept will disappear along with the pretentious price tag. Mass-produced art will be sold in stores and in drive-ins where people eat; and exhibitions from Tokyo to Los Angeles will be tuned in on T.V."⁴² Within the hybrid organizational and informational environment presented at the National Gallery, so far from the stores and drive-ins associated with popular culture, NETCO products lost contact with their neo-conceptual theoretical underpinning in sensitivity information and its subcategories. Many of the positive comments in the exhibition guest book suggest that the *Environment* was treated like a kind of funhouse whose content resonated, in entertaining ways, with the company's mode of operations, as embodied in its name.⁴³ The museum's administered, regulated, and contemplative reception of artworks had been replaced by the possibility of the active exploration of a corporate milieu (president's office, secretarial pool area, display area, etc.), its material culture (office furniture,

communications and reproduction technology), and products. While visitors toyed with the NETCO *Environment's* originality through word games, comments on specific products, and simple statements of pleasure, its spatial/organizational hybridity masked another singular feature of the exhibition's *overdetermination* as socio-economic and cultural event that has yet to be explored.

Seth Siegelaub has commented on the transformation of the artist from an avant-garde "outsider" into what he describes as a "a 'serious' normal, productive, liberal arts profession, a 'career' almost like any other where it is possible for someone to earn a living."⁴⁴ He has also commented on the way that the term "avant-garde" has been appropriated by the business community as a method of legitimating new and advanced cutting-edge strategies and products where, one might add, the making of money is strategically and "creatively" confused with the making of new cultural forms and experiences.⁴⁵ Although there is no direct association to be established between NETCO's ideology, or its practices, and Siegelaub's observations, there is substantial secondary evidence to suggest that the company, and especially the 1969 NETCO *Environment*, functioned as a unique interface between the worlds of business and avant-garde art because some of the objects that were presented in the exhibition – in particular, the office furniture and equipment – functioned in both arenas and were, from the artist's perspective, chosen on the basis of their material and symbolic relationship to business culture. Their appearance in a museum context served to highlight, in a provocative manner, the usual nature of NETCO's three-dimensional experiment in the integration of art and life. In addition to this bridge between art and life, there was also another bridge created by the circulation of office furniture and equipment from private businesses and government organizations in Ottawa to the interior world of a museum managed by a different class of administrators who were dedicated to the preservation and showcasing of selected items from the class of material artifacts known under the rubric "Art."

44 Seth Siegelaub, "The Why and What of THE CONTEXT OF ART/THE ART OF CONTEXT Project," 25, 26.

45 Ibid., 25.

ART AND LIFE III:

A PARTIAL INVENTORY OF THE OBJECTS THAT ENTERED THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA IN MAY 1969

The NETCO *Environment* physically and conceptually promoted a corporate model of exchange that was relayed by its design, spatial organization, and material culture. Specialized objects and complementary human resources crossed the threshold of the National Gallery at the end of May and beginning of June 1969. The objects included office furniture and equipment, while the human resources consisted of a company president, vice-president, and selected employees, including a number of secretaries.⁴⁶ The transformation of the ground floor of the National Gallery of Canada into a corporate environment was spearheaded by the president and reinforced by borrowed office furniture and equipment that included two desks, one walnut bookcase, four rotary chairs, two straight chairs, four typewriters, four wastebaskets, five coat stands, two bookcases, and four filing cabinets lent by the Department of Defence Production.⁴⁷ Other equipment comprised an electric typewriter, one electronic calculator, two stenorettes with rolling tables (lent by Raymond Business Machines, Ottawa), a microfilm reader (lent by Recordak of Canada Ltd, Ottawa), and four mannequins, lent by Caplan Department Store, Ottawa.⁴⁸ Xerox of Canada lent a Telecopier (fax machine), and Pitney-Bowes of Canada Ltd., provided a stamp machine. Six telephones with separate lines were installed, one each for the president, the secretaries, and a receptionist.⁴⁹ Six chest-type freezers were also rented for the exhibition.⁵⁰ The furniture and office equipment served as the corporate environment's "material culture."⁵¹

The *Environment's* organization and material culture were complemented by audio chosen to "augment" the *Environment's* potential actuality and its sensitivity as "working organism" by introducing sounds of production (factory noises) and other forms of work activity (office noises).⁵² The material elements of the *mise en scène* were complemented by four secretaries, the president himself (who was available, when in his office, for discussion with the public) and various "activities" (a conference, a presentation of inflatable vinyl dresses, telecopier [fax] transmissions, performances, and interventions) held during the exhibition at the National Gallery or in Ottawa.⁵³

The *mise en scène* at the National Gallery was complicated by the presence of the president and secretaries whose activities were simply a natural extension of their everyday professions. Thus, the secretaries

46 The layout of the secretarial area of the *Environment* suggests that the space was designed to accommodate up to four secretaries. Iain Baxter recalls that secretaries were periodically transferred from a government pool when they were unable to continue their work in the *Environment*. Telephone conversation with the author, July 17, 2009.

47 National Gallery Outward shipping order no. 453, July 16, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

48 The National gallery of Canada, Outward Shipping order nos. 349, 350, 354, July 9, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

49 L. D. Allatt, NGC building administrator, to Xerox of Canada Limited, May 16, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. The Telecopier (what is now known as a fax machine) was introduced in 1966 and was, therefore, relatively speaking, a new technology. Application for additional telephones, Telephone Service Office, Local 2-4541, Administrative Telecommunications Agency, Department of Transport, May 14, 1969. Pierre Th  berge to Jack Macgillivray, NGC installations officer, April 21, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

50 Pierre Th  berge to Jack Macgillivray, April 21, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. Untitled seven-page report, probably by Pierre Th  berge, p. 2. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

51 "Material culture" is used in its anthropological/archaeological senses to designate material artifacts considered to embody meaning (and therefore ideas) related to a specific culture, its customs, beliefs, and modes of operation.

52 See, for example, the following comments in an unsigned document, in the form of a final report (possibly by Pierre Th  berge) on the exhibition: "Iain Baxter had intended the 'environment' to be the expression of his company as a working organism, no more as a concept but as a working organism. The June experiment, with its office area, secretaries, typewriters, adding machines, dictating machines, Xerox machines, etc.... made his company 'real.'" Untitled seven-page report, probably by Pierre Th  berge, p. 2. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

53 For a list of events, see "Activities of the N. E. Thing Co." in *Report on the Activities of the N. E. Thing Co.*

were actual secretaries, and Baxter was present in his capacity as company director. However, since the secretaries were either hired, or borrowed from other government agencies, their work functions were framed by their new working environment (the NETCO *Environment*) and also by its architectural context (National Gallery of Canada). But their work practice was also regulated by the government agency they worked for in the case of borrowed secretaries. Baxter, in contrast, was simultaneously a company director and an artist. These functions, which Baxter exploited in various ways during the exhibition, contrasted sharply with those of the secretaries, whose anonymity was part of their subordinate and subservient day-to-day roles as ancillary/support personnel. However, Baxter was also remunerated by the National Gallery for the time that he spent in Ottawa during the exhibition.⁵⁴ This hierarchic relationship of employer to employee complicated his symbolic relationship with NETCO. Thus the material and symbolic artificiality and theatricality of the *Environment* was based on its spatial and material organization as displayed *within* the ground floor of the National Gallery but also in relation to an invisible administrative infrastructure. While the National Gallery's overarching cultural/physical framework allowed spectators, even when they were momentarily confused, to eventually place the *Environment* in the category of an artwork – although, clearly, a complex and theatrical one – as opposed to an actual corporation, it also had a similar effect on NETCO and its personnel by clearly placing them in an inferior architectural, economic, and political position to their host institution. However, in spite of the array of contradictions that existed in the relationship between NETCO, its *Environment*, and the National Gallery, the deployment of the *Environment's* material culture and its “activation” by human agents operating in various roles (president, secretary, receptionist) effectively introduced the contemporary spectator to a new type of exhibition/artwork that raised questions about what was and was not a valid artwork and experience.⁵⁵

NETCO products also entered the National Gallery under the same contradictory conditions of existence. The selection – some dating from 1965 – included prints, wall and floor photographs, lettered words, plaques, still lifes, landscapes of various kinds (including light box, bagged and inflatable landscapes), an inflated oceanscape, various other inflatables, dresses, plastic reproductions of well-known artworks, one Wire Fence work from 1968, rolls of coloured plastic and a series of ACTs and ARTs. But when one examines the origins of the NETCO products, one discovers that they were supplied not only by NETCO but also by the Carmen Lamanna Gallery in Toronto, which served as an outlet for NETCO products, thus

54 Baxter suggested a fee of \$1000 to cover his time in Ottawa during the exhibition. Memorandum to Jean Boggs, NGC director, from Pierre Théberge, December 13, 1968, p. 7. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

55 In an interesting twist on secretarial roles, the receptionist was the actual National Gallery receptionist. Concerning the ambiguous reception of the *Environment*, see, for example, the following comment: “The alteration of the space [National Gallery ground floor] was convincing enough for some people to come into the Gallery and to ask if they really were in the National Gallery of Canada.” Untitled seven-page report, probably by Pierre Théberge, p. 1. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. See also the following comments in the Guest Book: “Sale copieur de la réalité!” (June 6) or “Very poor taste: It makes the National Art Gallery look like a cheap department store!” (July 3) Guest Book, 3, 17. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

56 See Carmen Lamanna inventory list of works No 556, May 5, 1969 received by the National Gallery and Pierre Théberge's letter of December 10, 1969 which noted that the works were returned to Baxter by mistake. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

57 Pierre Théberge to H. Malcolmson et al. Although this proposal does not seem to have materialized, plans for the exhibition layout contain an area that is variously identified as “Display Area,” Art Exhibit,” and “N. E. Thing Co. Gallery Area.”

58 Although the word or sense of “transformation” appears in various guises in commentaries on the *Environment*, the question of a nested logic does not seem to have been addressed. For example, in 1993 Pierre Théberge described the exhibition in the following terms: “Given the occasion of presenting itself and its activities, the N. E. Thing Co. ... chose to transform the ground floor of the building into its headquarters.” Pierre Théberge, “N. E. Thing Company in Ottawa,” in *You Are Now in the Middle of a N. E. Thing Co. Landscape*, 63. If one accepts that the N. E. Thing Co. *Environment* was conceptually positioned in an intermediate fashion between the National Gallery and Baxter's idea of a business product museum, the presence of a proposed (business) museum in Baxter's plans functions (and not just in hindsight) as an intuition or forewarning of the introduction of business practices of one sort or another into museum culture. The recent history of contemporary art museums, especially the aspect of it that concerns corporate sponsorship and the display of corporate goods, is a confirmation of the transformations that accompany the introduction of business practices in contemporary art exhibitions spaces. The 1969 *N. E. Thing Co. Environment* is, in light of these recent transformations, a singular reference in this history. For a discussion of one example of the consequences of corporate sponsorship, see David Tomas, “The Chrysler Effect and the Museum's Terminal Paradox,” *Parachute* 75 (July, August, September 1994): 51–54.

59 While I do not have the space to pursue these questions in detail here, it is worth noting their potential importance for any further exploration of this exhibition.

replicating the dominant economic infrastructure in which NETCO was designed to be situated in order to successfully integrate the artist as a productive social unit.⁵⁶ There was also a proposal for a museum of early company products such as bird drawings and the first inflatable cloud.⁵⁷

Instead of the conventional reproduction/transformation of one space into another, the museum of early company products suggests a “Chinese Box,” Matryoshka doll, or nested model – a museum within museum or artwork within artwork – with its *mise en abyme* logic.⁵⁸ The plan for a “corporate” museum within a national museum raises many interesting questions about the ambiguous symbolic status of artworks that are presented as potential commodities, their relationship to their corporate environment, as well as their negotiated corporate-based relationship to the National Gallery of Canada, as artworks and as ostensible commodities (although clearly not for sale in the museum, since this might have been too radical a gesture).⁵⁹ These were questions that had already been addressed, albeit in a much more restrained and conventional fashion, in earlier environments.

The NETCO *Environment* is rooted in the work of artists like Allan Kaprow and Claes Oldenburg. Traces of Kaprow's concept of the happening are visible in NETCO's flamboyant and institutionalized month-long event. While the NETCO *Environment* was not a pure happening because of its institutional context, basic structure, and unabashed flirtation with corporate models and practices, it does share a few basic environmental, theatrical, and experiential characteristics with those of a happening. However, its context and the model on which it was based pointed elsewhere, to a dead space or no-man's land between art and life, a space where the pun reigned supreme through its witty command of paradox and parody. But the space was always framed by the word “ART,” its economy and institutions, as the example of the NETCO *Environment* demonstrates; even when the word “ART” was itself prominently framed by a corporate name and product identity. However, since the art world was framed, in turn, by a more pervasive economy that was in transition between industrial and post-industrial forms of production, NETCO reflected in a precise and yet contradictory manner the dilemmas of artists who were experiencing the same changes in work practices as workers in other sectors of society.

There are also references that can be detected in NETCO's *Environment* to Claes Oldenburg's famous ironic commercial enterprise

The Store, which operated under the auspices of Oldenburg's Ray Gun Mfg. Co., in association with the Green Gallery, New York, in December–January 1961–62. While artworks were presented and sold in the guise of consumer products in *The Store*, Oldenburg's activities were clearly conceived as an ironic commentary on American consumerism, especially since it was situated in a storefront as opposed to a museum. The NETCO *Environment* functioned in a fundamentally different manner, while still retaining an important filiation with Oldenburg's earlier mode of strategically, if not ironically, blurring the commercial boundaries between art and life. The difference concerns the *Environment*/corporate headquarters' symbolic and politico-economic overdetermination. The compounding of contradictions was a product of an institutional frame (National Gallery) that was set within another frame (Lorne Building); the set of organizational and behavioural constraints associated with these frames; and the in situ company/environment whose logic resonated with its location's history, functions, and symbolism. The NETCO *Environment*'s public presentation in the form of a "visual sensitivity information centre" was the product of these frames, constraints, logic, and rules. It functioned, therefore, not as if it were a display or promotional event in support of North American corporatism but as a model of Art's possible place in its matrix.

What also makes the NETCO *Environment* unusual was its ambitious scale and scope, which were in a sense the measure of the corporate model it had adopted. However, the method of its assimilation was also unique because the *Environment* – the corporate headquarters itself – was also an "end product" of sensitivity information research and product development in the sense that the Baxters had progressively "sensitized" an abstract model by way of its concrete manifestation. The spatial position of the *Environment* suggests, moreover, that NETCO was in a position to comment on the complex relationship that they had negotiated with the National Gallery.⁶⁰ However, the exhibition suggests that NETCO exploited its relationship for its own promotional ends, and that the politics of the relationship established was more than counterbalanced by the less visible but no less significant ambitions of the National Gallery, as represented its choice of NETCO, its assimilation within the Lorne Building's architectural space, and the timing of the exhibition's opening.

Notwithstanding the *Environment*'s underlying matter-of-factness as represented in its office furniture, as well as the logistical pragmatism

and expediency of its deployment of resources and methods of display, the "object-goods" displayed and promoted in its space were curious and ironic as a consequence of their placement and juxtaposition in a simulated office environment. This was also the case with the *Environment* when considered as an "envelope-concept" defined by its purported functions of corporate headquarters/information centre because it too was an eccentric product, in spite of its basic instrumental logic, of an intercourse between the National Gallery and the Baxters/NETCO that had, in effect, coalesced around the idea of theatre as opposed to an actual functioning office.

The *Environment*'s day-to-day experience-generating potential was complemented by a series of activities that promoted additional layers of interaction or performativity throughout the course of the exhibition. They included public presentations, lectures, events or actions, one closed-door conference, and another private meeting.⁶¹ The closed-door conference and meeting with members of the Science Council of Canada were the most uncommon events because they reveal an additional layer of multidisciplinary proto-academic intellectual activity that would not automatically be associated with an art exhibition of the late 1960s.⁶² Satellite works, as well as public and private events, suggest that in addition to being the theatricalization of "working organism," the NETCO *Environment* was also multifaceted, energetic, and it even exhibited a latent political, academic, and populist educational dynamic through its social extensions that were not visible in the exhibition itself.⁶³

NETCO's business model, with its reference to non-art activity and economically productive social behaviour, its president and other staff, would seem to point in the direction of an early form of institutional critique.⁶⁴ This interpretation is supported by the public's ability to converse with NETCO's president in his office and to handle objects in an institution notorious for its antiseptic handling of artifacts and its policing of spectator behaviour.⁶⁵ However, the choice of Baxter, the June 3 opening of the exhibition, the tone of the speeches during the opening ceremony, and the various internal memoranda that circulated in the months prior to the opening suggest that the exhibition was fully supported by the National Gallery and that any critical engagement with the institution and consumer culture was not perceived as a threat. On the contrary, the exhibition was treated as an opportunity to broadly engage with other components and representatives of Canadian artistic culture (National Arts Centre) as well as with the important representatives of a national, local, and regional economies ranging from a government minister to

60 There is no clear evidence of an attempt to comment on institutional questions. On the one hand, the negotiation around what could and could not be done in the context of the NETCO *Environment* exhibition reveals Baxter's clear desire to expand NETCO activities beyond the National Gallery's physical boundaries and into the surrounding urban environment. On the other hand, NETCO's ambitions as reflected in National Gallery memoranda written by Théberge in the months preceding the opening reveals the National Gallery's willingness to accommodate itself to Baxter's requests within basic financial and administrative restrictions. Although Baxter has described the *Environment* as a kind of ironic guerilla theater (telephone conversation with the author, July 17, 2009), NETCO's passage into the institutional space was logistically and intellectually supported.

61 Notable public events included Telecopier transmissions, a fashion presentation of inflatable dresses, a display of National Gallery packing cases, and the placement of Keep Out signs. For the full list, see "Activities of the N. E. Thing Co." in *Report on the Activities of the N. E. Thing Co.*

62 The French conceptual artist Bernard Venet is an example of an artist who in the late 1960s and early 1970s attempted to actively cultivate relationships with academic disciplines and their practitioners. But he appears to have only been interested in a simple transposition of current states of pure knowledge. As Ursula Meyer noted in 1972, "The subject of Venet's work is the documentation of science." Ursula Meyer, *Conceptual Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), xi.

63 It is interesting to note Iain Baxter's academic formation, in particular his educational degree, in this connection. He received a B.Sc. and an M. Ed. from the University of Idaho (1959, 1962) and an M.F.A., from Washington State University (1964). See also an N. E. Thing Co. communication to Pierre Elliott Trudeau dated June 20, 1969, in which he proposes the addition of a general cultural/humanities council. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

64 For an interesting contemporary critical and sociologically inspired exploration of the relationship between a gallery's inner and outer spaces, see David Lamelas' 16 mm film, *A Study of the Relationship between Inner and Outer Space*, which was produced for the 1969 *Environments Reversal* exhibition at the Camden Arts Centre in London. This exhibition was held almost simultaneously (June 26–July 27, 1969) with the NETCO *Environment* exhibition. The two works explore, in very different ways, and with different objectives, the relationship between the inner and outer environments of an exhibition space. While Lamelas' film surveys the nest of social spaces in which an exhibition exists as an apparently isolated cultural event, NETCO's *Environment* obliquely exposes, almost in spite of itself, and in a much less coherent and wilful manner, a similar perspective on the relationship between the artist, the artwork, and society.

65 J. Macgillivray to Lieut. Grimes, June 5, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

individual businessmen.⁶⁶ The playful context of these engagements and exchanges tend to mask their ultimate social utility as privileged moments of contact and dialogue – sensitivity encounters – between representatives of antithetical practices and world views. The NETCO *Environment* served as a prototype for a medium of acculturation, socialization, and integration between the cultural and economic sectors of society because it operated as a context for a dialogue and reciprocal exchange of information and ideas. If there was a possibility for an institutional critique or analysis to arise, the opportunity was stillborn, for the exhibition's organization and presentation clearly reveal the degree of institutional collusion that was necessary for a critical assessment to materialize under these conditions of visibility. The degree of collusion also foregrounds the reasons for the impotence of any critique under these circumstances.⁶⁷ Far from being marginalized or stigmatized, the artist was embraced as a talented entertainer and productive member of the social order. One has only to note the fact that the artist and exhibition were strategically chosen to coincide with the opening of the National Arts Centre and that it was opened by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to be reminded once more of the National Gallery's perception of NETCO's potential social utility.

However, the history of the planning and execution of the exhibition points to another and little explored area of power, acculturation, and integration. There is an equally important performative dimension to the NETCO *Environment*. It consisted of the invisible, intra-institutional activities that were deployed to ensure the successful execution of Baxter's proposal to present his company headquarters at the National Gallery. The project's success was based on broad intra- and extra-institutional planning and coordination, as is clear from the exchange of memoranda between Boggs, Th  berge, other National Gallery staff, as well as on the letters of thanks that were sent out after the exhibition was dismantled.⁶⁸

The principal performers in the planning and execution of the NETCO *Environment* were the Baxters and Pierre Th  berge (who functioned as a kind of "supply chain manager" [SCM] for the exhibition's successful installation at the National Gallery. In addition to Th  berge, there were the other members of the National Gallery's staff engaged in the organization and construction of the exhibition.⁶⁹ Finally there was the National Gallery's director, who, in association with the assistant curator, could serve as a referee or final arbitrator between the ambitions and requests of the artist and capacity of the institution to meet those requests. These actors

66 This opportunism was also reflected in Baxter's meeting with various corporate and ministerial representatives. See, for example, Baxter's meeting on June 20 at 3 p.m. with members of the newly formed (1966) Science Council of Canada at 150 Kent Street. But it also encompassed the art world, as in the case of the closed-door N. E. Thing Co. conference on "Visual Sensitivity Information, Communication and Ramifications."

67 Here it is perhaps important to point to the cancellation of Hans Haacke's 1971 exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the rejection of his contribution, *Manet-Projekt 74*, by the Wallraf-Richartz Museum for their *Projekt 74* exhibition as examples of effective institutional critiques, and Daniel Buren's works, in general, as an example of ineffective ones because they are effectively absorbed by the institutions, if not actually commissioned by them.

68 See, for example, the letters contained in the Baxter Archive at the National Gallery of Canada. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

69 The following people were involved at one stage or another in the exhibition's planning: Jean Sutherland Boggs; Pierre Th  berge; Jack Macgillivray (installations officer); H. Malcolmson; Pat Watson; Aubert Brillant; D. Silcox; P. Dwyer; Patrick Lyndon; Frank White; L. D. Allatt (building administrator); Richard Graburn; George Ladas (shipping room); Lieut. Grimes; D. H. Dobson (National Museums of Canada); Rose LaFlamme (hired secretary); R. M. Leary (assistant general manager, Planning & Design Branch, National Capital Commission); Gordon Gibson (executive assistant, Office of the Prime Minister); Mrs. G. J. Cook (appointments secretary, Office of the Prime Minister); D. A. MacDonald, branch manager, Xerox of Canada Ltd.; Mr. Sutherland, Raymond Business Machines; Mr. Davy, Recordak of Canada Ltd.; Mr. Ralph, Caplan Department Store; M. Yvon B  dard, Pitney-Bowes of Canada Ltd. This list is, of course, by no means exhaustive, but it does give an idea of a communications network that is rarely, if ever, factored into the definition of an exhibition.

70 The movements of information and objects between the National Gallery's infrastructural and exhibition spaces is also duplicated in another cultural/institutional context and historical moment through the movement and rearticulation of information between the National Gallery's Archive in which the NETCO *Environment* archive is preserved, the multiple spaces of research and writing and their inscriptive/archival platforms, and the volume in which this article is finally published.

71 For another example of an event that cannot be confined to the space and time of its presentation, see the range of organizational and experimental/technical activities that took place in the case of the planning and presentation of *9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering*, held at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York, October 13–23, 1966. For an overview of *9 Evenings*, see the exhibition catalogue *9 Evenings Reconsidered: Art, Theatre, and Engineering, 1966* (Boston: MIT List Visual Arts Center, 2006). If there are limits to be drawn in the case of the N. E. Thing Co. *Environment*, they might be traced in two ways. First, by means of the initial proposition and its idea of transposing a "company" from one place to another. Second, through the decision that the Baxters took to travel as a family from Vancouver to Ottawa by car, producing art across Canada, some of which was included in the National Gallery exhibition.

and their actions represent the possibilities or potentialities of the exhibition/*Environment* as it moved from the state of an idea/proposal to that of a public event.⁷⁰

If one takes into account the preparation and construction of the *Environment* (which included the logistics of renting, borrowing, and transporting office equipment and the human resources required to construct and animate it after its opening), the *Environment's* performative dimension was not confined to the first floor of the Lorne Building. Moreover, it was not restricted by the dates of the exhibition (which encompassed the satellite events and meetings, including a final performance "Extension" of Nancy Graves's *Camels* (life-size sculptures) by Mark Whitney, a NETCO "employee" on July 6, the day of the exhibition's dismantling). It also penetrated into the National Gallery's administrative infrastructure, and it was functioning in the months preceding the exhibition. This aspect of the project can be measured by way of the quantity and quality of human resources deployed in order for the environment to materialize. Although there is a tendency to limit the period of an exhibition to the dates of its actual presentation, these limits do not take account of all the other dimensions that might be directly implicated in defining a work of art's actual parameters. As NETCO's case demonstrates, exhibition dates do not necessarily encompass a work's *field of operations*.⁷¹ In this sense, exhibitions can exist in a coherent and potentially public manner only in the archives in which they have been preserved for posterity. This makes the work of the historian all the more valuable; moreover, it is this specific kind of work that can lead to new post-institutional models for the production of a next generation of exhibition.

There is every reason to suspect that the *Environment* as a potential business or corporate setting existed and functioned surreptitiously, albeit in a fragmentary and latent manner, well before its actual opening on June 3, 1969. Here I am not referring to the "final" constructed *Environment* that might have been in place a few days or hours before the opening, or the version that was animated and transformed daily by the activities of company personnel. I am referring to the way that its requirements – its compositional elements – marshalled activities, defined expectations, promoted work patterns, and *pioneered* a (corporate or economic) world view that gradually acculturated National Gallery administrators and workers to the *idea* of accepting a corporation – or the concept or idea of a corporation – as a potential and viable equivalent of an artwork. In 1993 Pierre Th  berge noted, in connection with the 1969 *Environment*, "For myself, I remember the *preparation time and the exhibition itself* as

a wonderfully happy and exciting period" (my emphasis). This phrase, with its focus on an experiential dimension that bridges an exhibition's administrative and display zones of activity, brings to a close his summary of the exhibition – a summary that also registers the fact that he was surprised by the Baxters' proposal and that the *Environment* "surprised and mostly amused the visitors to the National Gallery."⁷² Surprise and amusement point to the *Environment's* uniqueness and populism, as does Théberge's conclusion, with its testimonials to the pleasures associated with (one assumes) new and challenging experiences and the excitement generated by a particularly effervescent period in the history of contemporary art when all frontiers were subject to redefinition. However, there is also something singular – almost too smooth – about this remark where preparation and exhibition are presented as equivalent experiences of pleasure and excitement. Théberge's comments were, of course, perfectly in line with what one might expect from a senior curator recollecting a rich and stimulating period in his career, and his comments certainly accord with what he described as NETCO's ability to displace "things and events from one context to another – most often with great humour and lively intelligence."⁷³ However, the articulation of preparation and exhibition creates a continuum paved by pleasure and excitement between the National Gallery's infrastructural administrative spaces and those areas devoted to public exhibitions in spite of the fact that there are abrupt spatial/architectural disjunctions between them. Normally this kind of affective linkage would pass unnoticed, because it is confined to curatorial and other administrative activities that bridge architectural spaces on their own terms. Then again, it is the unusual nature of the NETCO *Environment* that highlights the relationship that Théberge briefly and naturally mentions in his account. A statement like the displacement of "things and events from one context to another," although not originally directed to the articulation of architectural spaces in the National Gallery, resonates with an incongruous revelatory force as it exposes a particularly sensitive historical juncture. For one can argue that NETCO's conceptual and operational (incorporated) interface between the art and the business worlds rearticulated, in the case of the 1969 *Environment*, the museum's private and public domains through the movement of human resources, material, and symbolic artifacts. This traffic was of course regulated by administrative decisions concerning what was and was not feasible (from budgetary and logistical viewpoints), given NETCO's requirements. Nevertheless, the NETCO *Environment's* ambitions lubricated its capacity of institutional infiltration through the movement of a specific class of objects inasmuch as the *Environment's* success implicated the full cooperation of the National Gallery staff and an impressive deployment of its resources.

72 Pierre Théberge, "N. E. Thing Company in Ottawa," in *You Are Now in the Middle of a N. E. Thing Co. Landscape: Works by Ian and Ingrid Baxter*, curated by Nancy Shaw and William Wood, UBC Fine Arts Gallery, February 19 to March 27, 1993 (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1993), 63.

73 Théberge, "N. E. Thing Company in Ottawa," 63.

There was another dimension to this story of incongruity: the insertion of the project into an existing space. Since it was conceived as a kind of corporate headquarters or its model (NETCO had never previously existed in a form that was equivalent to the National Gallery *Environment*), its most visually striking and public/performative dimensions related to its spatial organization, which was governed by its pre-existing location. It was therefore by way of the *Environment's* architectural integration that the public was invited to intermingle and interact with the company's various departments and products, thus engaging in an implicit dialogue with NETCO's corporate philosophy and its relationship to the National Gallery. The addition of a human resource element, in particular the president's attendance in his office, which was open to the public, animated the environment and reduced the gap between the artist and spectator, art and life, but did not eliminate it. What remained barely visible, but nevertheless potently present in its distant materiality and symbolism, was the *Environment's* governing architectural framework. The Lorne Building, in conjunction with the NETCO corporate model, served to envelop and seal away any form of unconventional activity in the invisible mantle of dominant administrative practices.

Finally, there were other interesting performative breaches of the National Gallery's institutional/architectural frames that were pursued through the use of a Telecopier (fax) machine which created another dimension of communication and information transfer.⁷⁴ This dimension duplicated the function of the closed-door conference by knitting together important elements of the art world (in this case the Paula Cooper Gallery, New York) in order to create a communications network that centred on the NETCO *Environment* and the National Gallery. Again, the contents of the transmissions were perhaps less important when measured against the exhibition's overall ambitions than the fact that a communications line was activated and established. However, there was also another facet to the idea of electronic communication and data transmission. On May 16, 1969, L. D. Allatt, the National Gallery's building administrator, wrote to Xerox of Canada to follow up on a request by a Mr. Davies of the Museums Corporation, Purchasing Department, to obtain a telecopier for the NETCO *Environment*. He pointed out that the National Gallery was able to draw 2,700 daily public visits to its exhibitions. Since the *Environment* would be on the ground floor, office equipment on display in the exhibition, such as Xerox's Telecopier, could be expected to get a similar public exposure. Later he pointed out that the machine would be used to communicate with the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York as well as other galleries in Canada and the USA.⁷⁵ In a letter dated

74 The Telecopier was used on two occasions. See "Activities of the N. E. Thing Co." in *Report on the Activities of the N. E. Thing Co.*

75 L. D. Allatt to Xerox of Canada Limited, May 16, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

May 13, D. A. MacDonald, a branch manager, began his reply with the following cryptic sign of duplicity: "Business transactions seem to be conducted at such a swift pace today that either our appreciation is not expressed or our 'thank you's' sound indifferent." He continued in perfect corporate tone "However, I can assure you that we at Xerox of Canada Limited appreciate your interest in our company and would like to thank you sincerely for your recent order."⁷⁶ The machine was duly delivered. Communication was not only limited to binding widely separated elements of the art world, but it could also be used to create social relations based on economic ties between different (private and Crown) corporations whose interests were quite possibly diametrically opposed to those of an artist but not necessarily to those of an artist-entrepreneur or an institution in need of a specific piece of equipment.

ART AND LIFE IV: COMPANY BROCHURE AND COMPANY REPORT

Two publications bear witness to the compliant relationship that was established between the National Gallery and the Baxters during the planning and presentation the NETCO *Environment*. The first functioned as a company brochure and the second as a report of the company's activities during the exhibition. *Look, Voyez* was designed by Iain Baxter and served as a visual introduction to NETCO and its activities. It contained a president's message and was divided into five sections: Plant and Operations; Act Department; Project Department; Thing Department; and Movie Department. The back cover served as an information panel on the company's history, its structure, and the illustrations in the brochure. It also included a short disclaimer that was easy to overlook, but once read, could function as a strategic frame of reference for a reader's reception of the brochure and exhibition. The disclaimer declared:

The N. E. Thing Co., producer, and its marketing subsidiaries disclaim responsibility for results of use of this sensitivity information, or of any product, method or apparatus mentioned herein. It is the user's responsibility to make and be guided by his own tests in determining suitability of any such product, method, or apparatus for his purpose. No statement or suggestion herein is to be considered as a recommendation or inducement of any use, manufacture or sale that may infringe any patents now or hereafter in existence. All information contained in this publication is subject to change without prior notice.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ D. A. MacDonald to D. Allatt, May 13, 1969. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

⁷⁷ Iain Baxter, *Look, Voyez* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1969), back cover.

While framing the reader's/spectator's experience in corporate terms, the disclaimer placed the onus on the spectator/reader to create the conditions for his/her own *experience* of sensitivity information. Thus, questions of taste were subtly introduced into the N. E. Thing Co. → product → spectator/consumer equation, but there was a direct attempt to displace responsibility from the former to the latter while still retaining company control over product identity. Finally, each section of the brochure contained examples of the products produced by the department in question. It also contained an insert designed by Allan Fleming that could be mailed back to the company.⁷⁸

Look, Voyez was introduced by a bilingual president's message that focused on three key elements: sensitivity information, the visual unknown, and research. However, it was research that occupied the most space, thereby underlining its importance in directing the company's activities as well as underlining its key role in framing a reader's perceptions of the those activities. Thus Baxter noted (in parodistic reference to corporate and university-based research and development), "It is the visual unknown that challenges the N. E. Thing researchers. Like researchers anywhere, they seek to add to the world's store of knowledge – by exploratory research on the frontiers of basic theory, by product research for results in specific, tangible forms, by production research for processes that yield precise end-products." He continued: "These probings of the why and how of visual things and their combinations are efforts to discover distinct properties or effects and the means of putting them into operation." Baxter concluded his message with the observation that "[t]his, the research contribution to the N. E. Thing Co.'s progress, grows from imagination, intuitive daring, and persistence as well as technical competence."⁷⁹

Baxter's message contains unusual vocabulary like "research," "knowledge," and "theory" as well as more conventional art-related terminology such as "imagination" and "intuition" that circulated with varying degrees of ease in the art world of the late 1960s. Words like "research," "knowledge" and "theory" sound strange in the context of the NETCO *Environment*, not only because of their antithetical natures (notwithstanding NETCO's claims), but also because these words are most often associated with academic discourse and, in particular, scientific or technical research; while their presence in company literature points to systemic forms of laboratory-based research and development devoted to the design of new products. Baxter's employment of these words parallels the academic and technical uses both in relation to the company and to its products. Neither company nor products were the consequences of systematic research of an academic

⁷⁸ Allan Fleming (1929-1977) was one of Canada's foremost graphic designers. Fleming is known in particular for his 1960 design of the corporate logo for Canadian National Railway.

⁷⁹ Iain Baxter, 'President's Message,' *Look, Voyez*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1969), 2.

or scientific nature. Moreover, there is an important distinction that should also be made between the company and its products. Both functioned as "artworks" that negotiated the art/life paradox in different yet parallel ways, but one (the company) was more radical than the other.

The distinction between company and product is articulated in an interesting way in an anonymous and undated report that appears to take stock of the NETCO *Environment* and its impact shortly after it was dismantled. The report, possibly by Théberge, provides a number of interesting insights into the exhibition. The writer describes public reaction and sometimes responds to these reactions by clarifying the artist's intents or activities. He/she notes both the public and private events, including personal discussions with spectators, which took place during the exhibition. Interesting comments include the observation that "the alteration of the space was convincing enough for some people to come into the gallery and to ask if they really were in the National Gallery of Canada."⁸⁰ Turning to the artist himself, the writer notes that Baxter "had intended the 'environment' to be the expression of his company as a working organism, no more as a concept but as a working organism," and that the "June experiment" with its secretaries and office furniture, etc. "made his company 'real.'"⁸¹ These comments confirm the unique status of the *Environment* as full-scale model/prototype. The report went on to make a series of other complimentary observations about the conception and reception of the *Environment*. The writer noted the re-creation "in an artistic context" of an everyday working environment and the "shock" or "at least surprise" of some visitors who had difficulty placing secretaries and office furniture in an artistic frame of reference.⁸² While most "accepted, (or tolerated at least) the inflatable sculpture, the vacuum-formed landscapes or the photographs because they were not objects of everyday life and perception, and the general notion that art can be changed at least superficially to everyday preoccupations," there seems to have been enough resistance or confusion between the two environments (National Gallery/NETCO *Environment*) to have triggered a negative critical reaction.⁸³ While art could move into life and adopt its mannerisms, life was not (from the perspective of the general public) necessarily welcome in one of Canada's principal museums on equal terms with art – or it created perceptual and intellectual surprise with either positive (pleasure) or negative (confusion) by-products. However, the writer argued, in a manner that echoed Basford's comments about the social functions of art, that the environment's significance lay in its ability to "force people to pass judgement on the quality of their own life-environment [sic] just like they passed judgement on the quality and significance of the one presented at the Gallery."⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Anonymous and undated seven-page report, p. 1. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

⁸¹ Ibid., 2.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 2–3.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 3.

Later in the report, the writer raised the significant question of the environment's metaphoric status: "The company is not only a metaphor for an artist [sic] activities but also has to do with A) commenting on the status of the artist as a producer of goods and services which are collected, documented by museums, galleries and periodicals, in which the artist short-circuits the intermediaries and becomes his own promoter, documentor [sic], etc. This is of course related to the 'public' character if [sic] contemporary art and its increased reliance on the rapid transmission of information on activities of a greater number of artists."⁸⁵

These observations echo Basford's artist, goods, and consumers comments in his opening remarks, and they reveal knowledge of the exchanges, in particular several of Seth Siegelau's observations, that took place during the June 9 conference on Visual Sensitivity Information, Communications and Ramifications.⁸⁶

The National Gallery published a final report on the NETCO *Environment* in 1971. It presented a list of activities related to the environment, a layout of the company as presented in the National Gallery, a list of works exhibited, other ideas for projects (displayed in a light box in the Communication and Display Area), as well as a list of projects that were planned for the exhibition but were unrealized. It also contained a selected list of one-man and group exhibitions. The report was illustrated throughout with Baxter's documentary photographs of the exhibition and related activities.⁸⁷ The report concluded an important episode in the history of contemporary Canadian art, and the exhibition quietly slipped into history.

CONCLUSION (ART AND LIFE V): ON THE POLITICAL AMBIGUITIES OF A SOCIO-ARTISTIC EXPERIMENT AND ITS LEGACY

In an important catalogue essay for the exhibition *Work Ethic*, Helen Molesworth explores the relationship between transforming labour practices of artists and parallel shifts in American and global work practices since the 1960s.⁸⁸ Her essay identifies a number of basic correspondences between post-1960s modes of artistic production and the labour practices associated with the post-industrial production and management of information, and most recently, *experience*. She notes that artistic practices follow a similar trajectory of transformation from the traditional forms of skilled and semi-skilled labour associated with traditional manufacturing processes

⁸⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁶ See, in particular, Seth Siegelau's comments on the correspondence between a corporate structure, its compartmentalization of basic decision-making processes and those of artists, as well as the discussion around the redundancy of galleries, museums, and criticism in the transcripts to the "Visual Sensitivity Information, Communications and Ramifications" Conference. Tape 2, 3–4, 10–11. Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives. Siegelau's observations are important because he claims that there is a basic organizational logic common to business and artistic activities.

⁸⁷ There seems to be some ambiguity concerning the intended function of the final report. In a December 13, 1968, memorandum to Jean Boggs, Pierre Théberge notes on p. 6 that the catalogue is in two parts, a "presentation catalogue" of twelve pages, "luxurious looking," announcing the *Environment* and giving the information of the N. E. Thing Co., which would be ready for the opening of the exhibition and a second catalogue that would fully document the *Environment* and related activities. Another Théberge memorandum, dated May 1969, to National Gallery + N. E. Thing Co., describes in item 6 another type of catalogue "showing company products, explaining comp. policy, annual report, etc., etc., including list of all products of the Co. made to date." Exhibition Files – Box 33, NGC fonds, NGC Archives.

⁸⁸ Molesworth, "Work Ethic," 25–51.

to the new management and service forms of labour spawned by a post-industrial information-based economy. While the movement between types of products (objects and information) was accompanied by the de-skilling of traditional working methods and modes of production in the arts, it was also accompanied by an academic and intellectual re-skilling of artistic labour as the parameters of an artwork's conditions of existence and reception were displaced from hand-made object to product of the mind.⁸⁹ Following Howard Singerman, Molesworth identifies the university as one of the major sites for the re-skilling of the artist and his/her professionalization as a contemporary productive member of society.⁹⁰ As she points out, the identity of the artist and the nature of the artwork have changed as manual labour is replaced by "theoretical discourse."⁹¹ Although the university-educated Baxters are not mentioned in the *Work Ethic* catalogue, they were one of the first to conceive of their practice in a theoretical mould based on a business model, and NETCO was one of the first meta-artworks to exhibit the multiple contradictions that characterize the contemporary post-industrial artist's practice as it engages with the institutional matrix from which it has emerged and which gives it its shape. In 1993, Lucy Lippard published the following assessment of NETCO contributions to contemporary art that appears to capture the essence of NETCO's operational logic and its relationship to a rich and complex period in the history of art when all options were, for a number of years, open and pregnant with possibilities.

In the sixties, some conceptual artists and critics ... talked a lot about the possibilities of nonobject art reaching into nonart situations – called Life. There were a lot of tantalizing tentatives but few consistent achievements along these lives.... Networking, opening channels through which art ideas could flow into formerly arid fields was NETCO's forte, even when the results ultimately reinforced the status quo. Because the Baxters were so uncritical, so good natured, so cheerfully of their time and place, *unseparated from everyday life* (one of their projects was a Pee-Wee hockey team that won its league championship), NETCO occupies a unique place in the contested history of conceptual art that was never written and is now being rewritten.⁹²

Lippard's comments point to NETCO's absence of critical engagement and its failure to provide alternatives to existing social and political conditions. But she overlooks the underlying political significance of the overdetermination of its practice, which is not captured in the words "unseparated from everyday life." Lippard is not conscious of the fact that these words acknowledge the *political* success of the

Baxters' project when considered from the viewpoint of the art/life problem that had haunted artists throughout the twentieth century. Of all of the artists working at the end of the 1960s, the Baxters explored the possibilities of art and life in the most open-minded, laissez-faire, and McLuhanesque manner. NETCO, the peewee hockey team's success, the N. E. Professional Photographic Display Labs Ltd., and the Eye Scream Restaurant are symbols and models of the Baxters' success in breaching the boundaries of art. But this success was also based on the adoption of a business model and protocols and their application within the context of a laissez-faire ideology; and this is where the most basic contradictions of their practice resides.

The collective gamble of introducing the liberating concept of information into the art world of the 1960s had paid off in the sense that it allowed artists to redefine the functions of the artist and artwork in an unprecedented fashion. As Lippard explains in the preface to her seminal anthology, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object*, "Another idea that has come up often recently that interests me very much is that of the artist working as an interruptive device, a jolt, in present societal systems." She observes that "[a]rt has always been that, in a way ..." and that "... John Latham and his APG group in London, among others, are trying to deal with it more directly."⁹³ NETCO's *Environment* also functioned as an interruptive device through its particular mix of corporatism, environmental art, happenings, and information-based conceptualism, and in doing so it embraced more of the contradictory and diverging attitudes of the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially those that concerned the uneasy relationship between museums, curators, and artists at a time when all three were caught in the crosswinds of the history and politics of the late 1960s. NETCO's incongruous ambivalence toward institutions and conflicting political ideologies promoted an open-minded and populist stance toward the world around it. The Baxters were wide-eyed "tourist guides" in a world where the ordinary could be treated with the neutrality of a document, but from the perspective of a "Visual Informer's" ironic eye.⁹⁴ For Lippard and other commentators such as the London, Ontario, artist Greg Curnoe, NETCO was naively apolitical. For instance, Lippard confirmed in 1993 that "NETCO's jovial embrace of capitalism was (slyly) naïve, enthusiastic, apolitical. The Baxters *liked* corporate structures." And yet, "[t]heir use of TV and radio spots to advertise their art predicted the media focus of the 1980s." Earlier Lippard had mentioned that the Baxters' "corporate aspect" had, (in spite of her "enthusiasm for the Baxters' work"), "always [given her] pause because it was ultimately not a critical one. Humorous, yes. Ironic and corrective, no."⁹⁵

89 Ibid., 31–32.

90 Ibid., 32–33.

91 Ibid., 33.

92 Lippard, "You Are Now in the Middle of a Revisionist History of the N. E. Thing Co.," 59 (my emphasis). See also Greg Curnoe's caustic opening comments in a letter to Baxter written in June 1969 after Curnoe's participation in the NETCO conference at the National Gallery on June 9: "The idea of turning yourself into a business is interesting. The idea of practicing capitalism on aesthetic grounds is also interesting but a contradiction. ... The virtue of the N. E. Thing Co. is that it makes quite clear the fact that many artists practice social ideas that are identical to those of successful businessmen. I admire your extensions of other artists' work because you are doing openly what many others do deviously." Greg Curnoe, "Letter to N. E. Thing Co.," June 17 and 19, 1969, in *You Are Now in the Middle of a N. E. Thing Co. Landscape*, 44.

93 Lippard, preface to *Six Years*, 8.

94 Lippard, "You Are Now in the Middle of a Revisionist History of the N. E. Thing Co.," 59.

95 Ibid., 58 (emphasis in original).

But there is another perspective that can be adopted in relation to NETCO's naively apolitical practice that conserves Lippard's understanding of its limitations while also acknowledging that its overdetermined logic places it in a more delicate and contradictory relationship with the institutional culture and politics of the 1960s. One cannot simply treat the NETCO *Environment* as an exercise in political naïveté, just as one cannot reduce it to a semi-commercialized parody or a cynical product of self-promotion. Its logic points to a more complex and contradictory relationship to the National Gallery and perhaps a more insidious, if unconscious, role in the historical process of the modernization and integration of art institutions and practices by way of their socio-economic normalization. NETCO's 1969 *Environment* at the National Gallery of Canada was one of the first major sites where a new definition of the artist-entrepreneur was deployed and displayed through a series of products that acknowledged their "avant-garde" and consumer statuses under the watchful and discerning eye of a new type of information manager – a Visual Informer – whose cultivated sense of irony was intended to disarm critics and spectators alike. The *Environment* was also one of the most ambitious escape attempts by an artist collective to become ensnared in the web of institutionalized art, and as a consequence there is much to learn from this singular event in the history of contemporary Canadian art.

Today, artists can no longer claim to be isolated from a dominant culture because of their activities in isolated subgroups. Moreover, they are increasingly integrated in a global culture of production and consumption. The nexus for this culture is an international network of universities, academies, and institutions that together serve as a matrix for the production and reception of new critical and intellectually sophisticated academic artworks. The university now determines the conditions of existence for the artwork, and this institution is also at the centre of the matrix of possibilities and of the instrumentalization (museums, galleries, private collectors, auction houses) in which the artist is enmeshed.

While the 1969 NETCO *Environment* celebrated the success of NETCO's ability to promote its vision of the world through displays and performances that were lubricated by irony, parody, and pleasure, the exhibition was also the most concentrated expression of its ultimate limitations. Notwithstanding these limitations, the exhibition remains an important, if paradoxical, and unacknowledged reference for the type of meta-infrastructure work that might exist beyond an aesthetic of information and of administrative practice.

96 Kaprow, "Manifesto," in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, 81. "Manifesto" was originally published in 1966.

For one month in the summer of 1969, NETCO managed to put on display another way to play the game of art while nevertheless conforming to the Kaprowian postmodern model of the artist who is "willfully enmeshed in [a] dilemma of categories" and "who performs as if none of them existed."⁹⁶ Since these conditions of production and display have become the norm today, NETCO's month-long experiment is not only of paramount historical interest, but it is also of inestimable contemporary value as a reference for confronting the dilemmas and contradictions of the present.

**JOYCE WIELAND
AS CULTURAL
WORKER**

**Ecology, Nation, and New Leftism
in True Patriot Love**

KRISTY A.
HOLMES

1 Joyce Wieland fonds, The Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, 1999-003/005, File 5 [hereafter CTASC].

2 For other discussions of *True Patriot Love*, see John O'Brian, "Anthem Lip-Sync," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 21, no. 1-2 (2000): 140-49; Christine Conley, "True Patriot Love: Joyce Wieland's Canada," in *Art, Nation and Gender: Ethnic Landscapes, Myths and Mothers*, ed. Tricia Cusack and Sighle Breathnach-Lynch (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2003), 95-112; and Johanne Sloan, "Conceptual Landscape Art: Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow," in *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*, ed. John O'Brian and Peter White (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 72-84.

3 Johanne Sloan and I have both discussed the importance of feminism and New Leftism to Wieland's political thinking and artistic production. See Johanne Sloan, "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left, and the Question of Political Art in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 26 (2005): 81-104; Kristy A. Holmes-Moss, "Negotiating the Nation: 'Expanding' the Work of Joyce Wieland," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 20-43; and Kristy A. Holmes, "Negotiating Citizenship: Joyce Wieland's Reason Over Passion," in *The Sixties: Passion, Politics, and Style*, ed. Dimitry Anastakis (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 42-70. In using the term *New Left*, I am referring to the shift that occurred during the 1960s from the more traditional left, which had been primarily concerned with addressing the exploitation of working-class labour to a left that was increasingly concerned with the ways that power (colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy) had created inequalities based on race, gender, sexuality, and class. The New Left in Canada, for example, can be seen as a socialism that was not only concerned with the worker but also with the liberation of groups perceived as marginalized because of their race, gender, class, or culture. See Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005).

4 Pierre Théberge, "Interview with Joyce Wieland," *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971).

5 Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5. Wieland notes that although the catalogue "has something about my work," it does not have anything "about me as an artist."

In a 1986 interview, Barbara Stevenson, a graduate student, asked the Canadian artist and filmmaker Joyce Wieland about *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique*, her 1971 exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. "I feel there was a real sense of urgency on your part," says Stevenson, "a sense of urgency involving saving Canada, because you felt that it was in danger." Wieland tells Stevenson that *True Patriot Love* was not only a response to her growing interest in feminism, environmental issues, and American imperialism but also to her fear: "is there going to be a country left?" Although Wieland, a Toronto-born Canadian, lived in New York City from 1963 to 1971, the works of art and films she created during this period shifted from abstract paintings and sculptural assemblages to quilting, embroidery, knitting, and experimental film, all of which were primarily concerned with the Canadian nation.

True Patriot Love was arguably more than just an exhibition of works of art; it was Wieland's response to the fear that the nation-state of Canada was on the cusp of disintegration in the wake of Québécois nationalist sentiments and rising American economic and cultural imperialism.² The ways in which Wieland articulated her response to this fear suggest that it was not Trudeauvian liberalism or capitalist labour markets that would save Canada but a redefinition of nation and citizenship grounded in a politics of feminism and New Leftism.³ For her, forms of cultural production, such as the visual arts and film, had the potential to make serious contributions to such a redefinition. In an interview with the curator of *True Patriot Love*, Pierre Théberge, Wieland tells him that "there's so many things that people know now ... that, you know, we [Canada] are going down the drain, and everything else.... What it is, is like hoping that we can draw together over it [the exhibition] in some way." Wieland goes on to say that she does not want the exhibition to be seen as a "requiem" for the nation but rather "something positive" that is "about what we have in common in Canada."⁴ One of the most complex and interesting ways that she explored her desire to create works of art that people could identify with, and that incorporated her feminist and New Left politics, is the exhibition catalogue she created for *True Patriot Love*.

Categorizing this book as an exhibition catalogue is, however, misleading; both Wieland and Théberge have acknowledged that it functions as both a work of art and a catalogue. In an interview, Wieland noted that the catalogue was "another work" in the exhibition and lamented that it was "sad" there was not something "about [her] as an artist" produced for the exhibition.⁵ Théberge recently recalled that she had never really wanted to have a traditional exhibition catalogue, and

that it was envisioned from the outset as a work of art that could be seen as part of the exhibition itself. In lieu of the standard exhibition catalogue, which characteristically features a biography of the artist and several explanatory and sometimes critical essays on the artist's work, Wieland chose to use Bulletin No. 146, Biological Series No. 50, *Illustrated Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago*, written by A. E. Porsild and originally published by the National Museum of Canada in 1964. This official government document is a thorough categorization and description of the flora of the Canadian Arctic. Théberge remarked that the selection of Bulletin No. 146 was rather unintentional; he and Wieland went to browse in the bookstore on Sparks Street in Ottawa that carried all the material published by the government of Canada. Wieland chose Bulletin No. 146 because, according to Théberge, she liked the red cover, and it also happened to be about the Arctic and the environment. He added that he gave Wieland "total freedom" to choose whatever she wanted for the exhibition catalogue, as well as how she wanted to organize the exhibition itself.⁶

After unbinding Bulletin No. 146, Wieland collaged over the pages, using photographs of her works of art, fragments of the script for her film *The Far Shore* (released in 1976 and originally titled *True Patriot Love: A Canadian Love, Technology, Leadership and Art Story*), dried flowers, various photographs (such as landscapes, the Canadian Parliament Buildings, her own hands stitching various works of art, and Tom Thomson and his paintings), poems, songs and stories in Inuktitut, Gaelic, French, and English, as well as handwritten marginalia in both French and English. The collaged elements were pinned, glued, sewn, or paper-clipped on the original pages and then photographed.⁷ The result is that the pages of Wieland's catalogue are actually photographic reproductions of the collages she created. The works of art that she chose to photograph and collage into the catalogue are featured in *True Patriot Love* but take on alternative, and arguably more complex, meanings when juxtaposed with the original pages of Bulletin No. 146 and her handwritten marginalia. A limited number of catalogues were then printed and bound in a hardback maroon cover with gold titling.⁸ While the resulting catalogue looks like a defaced version of Bulletin No. 146, the act of reproduction alters, ever so slightly, the graphic layout of the original government document, reinforcing the idea that the volume is a reproduction rather than an altered original.

Each catalogue also contains a cloth Canadian flag glued to the inside front cover and a pocket on the inside back cover that includes a map of Canada, an interview with Wieland by Théberge and Michael Snow

6 Pierre Théberge, telephone conversation with author, January 13, 2009.

7 Ibid. Théberge could not remember who photographed the maquette but did recall that Wieland assembled it in the studio she had at the National Gallery.

8 Ibid. I have not found any record of how many catalogues were actually published, but Théberge thought it was around two hundred. The catalogue was not published as a limited edition; however, interestingly, it has never been reissued.

(then Wieland's husband), as well as a pamphlet listing the works of art in the exhibition and an essay on Wieland's films by Regina Cornwell, a New York-based arts and culture writer. This supplementary information is important to the dual function of the book as a work of art and an exhibition catalogue. It would explain, for example, why the original maquette of the book that Wieland created is kept in the archives of the National Gallery rather than in its permanent collection. The National Gallery clearly perceives the maquette as supporting documentation related to an exhibition rather than as a work of art.⁹ The inclusion of an interview and scholarly essay underscore the idea that although Wieland's work may have seemed unconventional in 1971, the art community and academia accepted it as both legitimate and important.

As a catalogue and a work of art, the book can be seen as an extension of the larger concepts that Wieland was concerned with in the *True Patriot Love* exhibition – the first solo exhibition given to a living female Canadian artist. Théberge had approached her about the show because he “had admired [her] work for its energy and inventiveness....”¹⁰ Although *True Patriot Love* has often been referred to as a retrospective, Théberge notes that it was never intended to be a traditional retrospective and was instead designed as an “environment” that would feature several new works of art.¹¹ Wieland was, in fact, given a studio at the National Gallery where she and her assistants created a number of textile works specifically for the exhibition.¹² In keeping with the original intent of the exhibition as an environment, she included a number of recently made quilted, embroidered, and knitted works. She also set up a duck pond with live ducks, brought in potted trees and plants, and had bird sounds playing throughout the gallery space. A giant cake in the shape of an iceberg, titled *Arctic Passion Cake*, and even a homemade perfume, *Sweet Beaver: The Perfume of Canadian Liberation*, completed the multi-sensory environment. The exhibition purposefully strayed from the more traditional gallery experience of contemplative observation and passive viewing to one that encouraged active viewer participation – petting ducks, smelling scents, listening to bird sounds, and reading messages on quilts. Both Wieland and Théberge wanted the exhibition to be radically different; as he puts it, “Ottawa was a stuffy place then ... I wanted to do something that would stop Ottawa in its tracks.”¹³ It is evident that an exhibition such as *True Patriot Love* allowed Wieland “total freedom” to experiment within an institutional space and sought to change the perception of the National Gallery from a place that housed the cultural output of bourgeois and patriarchal values to a place that increasingly reflected 1960s countercultural concerns.¹⁴

9 To complicate this idea further, the maquette is currently (as of January 2009) in the process of being professionally cleaned – something normally reserved for works of art and not archival documents.

10 Pierre Théberge, email message to author, March 31, 2000.

11 Ibid.

12 The National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives has several hours of film footage (since transferred to video) documenting Wieland in her studio creating these quilted works as well as installing them in the gallery.

13 Théberge, telephone conversation with author, January 13, 2009.

14 The 1969 exhibition that Théberge curated of N. E. Thing Co. is another example of such a strategy. In this exhibition, also described by Théberge as an “environment,” N. E. Thing Co. took over the lobby of the National Gallery, setting up office spaces that mimicked the headquarters of a company.

Not only did *True Patriot Love* differ from more traditional art exhibitions in the way it physically transformed the space of the museum, but it also shunned the modernist belief in apolitical art making. Wieland's exhibition, the catalogue included, was an artistic conceptualization of Canada that simultaneously revealed the things she perceived as threatening national unity, such as American imperialism, and the things that could unite Canadians, such as the land. One of the most important aspects of the exhibition, according to her, was that it highlighted the centrality of the land, and its preservation, to the nation's survival. As she told Théberge, “We have to get to the very essential thing now, the land, and how we feel about it.”¹⁵ Wieland's attempt to eradicate the institutional feel of the gallery was her way of trying to create a space that symbolically became Canada – the gallery was, for her, the land. Just as she altered the gallery space, she transformed the concomitant publication and created a catalogue that also metaphorically symbolized the land/nation. She describes this process in an interview in similar terms: “I found the book and it had all the flora of the Arctic and I chose that as my platform from which to build another work. So that the floor or the earth was the book and then I built up things over it and into it.”¹⁶ In another interview, Wieland states quite simply, “The main theme of the book is really ecology.”¹⁷ She literally cut and pasted her own narrative of the nation over the *techne* or logos of an official government document. Referring to the concept of technology, rationality, and culture, *techne* is a term that does not refer to actual technology but to the philosophical difference between culture/*techne* and nature/*poesis*. Like the catalogue, *True Patriot Love* can be seen as Wieland's intervention into the *techne* of the museum as a governmental institution. The paradox, of course, is that she required the support – financial and personal – of the museum to create the catalogue and the exhibition. She had to enter the patriarchal, bourgeois, and institutional realm of government that the museum symbolizes in order to subvert and critique those ideologies inherent within it. In short, the museum represents the very *techne* that she defaced in the catalogue and the exhibition.

Wieland had an overly utopian hope for *True Patriot Love* and the function of the catalogue. The catalogue was printed in a limited number and is currently available only to those dedicated to finding a used copy on eBay or Amazon. In order to consult its carefully preserved maquette in the National Gallery archives, one must make an appointment, register as a researcher, and wear archival gloves. In effect, the catalogue has remained very much a part of the structure from which it came: the museum. Despite all Wieland's theoretical and political interventions into the bulletin's *techne* and the complex

15 Théberge, “Interview with Joyce Wieland.”

16 Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5.

17 Joyce Wieland quoted in Peter Trepanier and Frances Smith, “The Maquette for *True Patriot Love* by Joyce Wieland” (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, 2006).

meanings that those interventions produce, it has been archived within the museum and within scholarship as an exhibition catalogue created by an artist, rather than being seen as a reconceptualized concept of nation created by a cultural worker. It is important, however, to look past the ways in which the catalogue and the exhibition have become subsumed within, and by, the institution and pay attention to the ways in which Wieland perceived herself as a cultural worker and her art as cultural production.

Wieland believed that the works of art that *True Patriot Love* comprised, the catalogue included, exceeded the modernist preoccupation with art as an exercise in form and aesthetic. In a number of interviews from the late 1960s and early 1970s, she often discusses the fact that she perceived the role of the artist in contemporary society as operating outside this modernist structure. In undated notes that appear to have been made to accompany a screening of her 1968 film *Reason Over Passion*, Wieland writes that she had “fantasies of being a government propagandist” and thought she was Leni Riefenstahl (Adolf Hitler’s filmmaker), while shooting and editing the film.¹⁸ By 1971, however, Wieland’s conceptualization of herself as an artist had shifted. In the interview with Théberge conducted on the occasion of *True Patriot Love*, she tells him that although she had felt she was working for the government as a propagandist in 1968, she was now “working for the people of Canada!”¹⁹ In another interview from the mid 1970s, Wieland says that she “felt a responsibility which I’d never felt before, about what I could do about the situation in this country....”²⁰ It is therefore not surprising that she is identified as a “cultural activist” rather than an artist in the pamphlet that appears in the back of the catalogue (it is also the only biographical reference to Wieland herself). It is clear that she perceived herself as a cultural worker and activist, and conveyed in many of these interviews is a sense of urgency and fear regarding the future of the Canadian nation-state and the importance of the artist to alleviate such fears and offer, visually and symbolically, a new vision of nation.

The new vision of nation that Wieland constructs in *True Patriot Love* and the catalogue is rooted in a politics of New Leftism and feminism. Her negotiation of New Leftism, however, was never about supporting any one political ideology or party, and she often drew on various New Left notions by engaging in subject matter that involved an implicit critique of the realm of the *techné*, in particular patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, and technological rationalism. In her works of art and films from the late 1960s and early 1970s, Wieland often expressed and explored her New Leftism by highlighting the exploitation of Canada’s

18 Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1993-009/010, File 120.

19 Théberge, “Interview with Joyce Wieland.”

20 Ardele Lister, interview from *Criteria*, special issue, “The Politics of Film in Canada,” (c. 1975) found in Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/005, File 73.

natural resources and the destruction of the environment as political issues that, at that point, had not been so publicly and politically linked. Her use of ecological and environmental subject matter in the pages of the catalogue, and the way the catalogue itself embodies the land/nation, can be seen as an anti-capitalist and feminist critique of American imperialism and technological rationalism.

One of the most significant issues that Wieland explores in the catalogue is the American exploitation of Canada’s natural resources for capitalist gain. On page 26, for example, she has handwritten, in French and English, a quotation from Henry David Thoreau, the nineteenth-century American ecologist and socialist philosopher: “To love nature was to worship freedom. To believe in nature was to rebel.” On the following pages Wieland has included close-up images of her 1970-71 quilted work *The Water Quilt*. Handwritten in the margins of page 29 is a description of the quilt as well as part of Thoreau’s words – “To believe in nature was to rebel.” It is significant that she included Thoreau’s quotation and juxtaposed it with close-up images of this particular quilted work. *The Water Quilt* comprises sixty-four small pillows that have been joined together with rope and adorned with wildflowers native to the Canadian Arctic embroidered on each pillow’s front panel. Each panel can be rolled up to reveal an excerpt from James Laxer’s book, *The Energy Poker Game*. Published in 1970, the book tells of the power and politics involved in controlling and exploiting Canada’s energy resources, including an American plot to steal Canadian water from the Arctic region. Laxer’s text outlines the Continental Resources Deal, an agreement that would establish a free North American market for all energy resources and effectively surrender the opportunity for Canada to develop energy resources on a national level and outside of “American corporate and military interests.”²¹ Laxer goes on to discuss the importance of Canada’s water as an energy resource and the supposed American plan to build large dams in Alaska and the Yukon to trap Arctic water and send it down man-made canals as far as Lake Superior and the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.²² He argues that such a plan would have devastating consequences not only for the Canadian economy but also for the environment and various ecological systems, especially in the Canadian Arctic.

Laxer and Mel Watkins, another university professor and a political economist, were leaders of the New Democratic Party splinter group, the Waffle. Formed in 1969, the Waffle was primarily concerned with the survival of the Canadian nation in the face of growing Québécois nationalism (and the fear that such nationalist sentiments would

21 James Laxer, *The Energy Poker Game: The Politics of the Continental Resources Deal* (Toronto: New Press, 1970), 1.

22 *Ibid.*, 35.

result in the province separating from the rest of Canada), as well as rising American capitalism and imperialism. Mel Watkins had headed the federal government's Task Force on Foreign Ownership and the Structure of Canadian Investment, and its 1968 Watkins Report concluded that American investment and control of the economy were going to lock Canada into a role of dependency on and vulnerability to the United States. Political and economic theorists and writers began to publish their concerns in such left-wing journals as the *Canadian Forum* and stressed the importance of developing a strong Canadian nation – politically, economically, and culturally – in order to resist American imperialism. Watkins and Laxer published a manifesto in 1969 titled *For an Independent Socialist Canada*. Its first page makes clear that the major threats to Canada's economic independence were American control of the Canadian economy and the growth of American multinational corporations. The other major issue the manifesto addressed was the importance of Canadian national unity. It states, "A united Canada is of critical importance in pursuing a successful strategy against the reality of American imperialism. Quebec's history and aspirations must be allowed full expression and implementation in the conviction that new ties will emerge from the common perception of 'two nations, one struggle.'"²³

The ideas of the Waffle were, I would argue, important in shaping Wieland's political consciousness and feminist subjectivity. In a 1973 interview, Anne Wordsworth, a Canadian author, asked Wieland if she had been keeping up with books and newspapers coming out of Canada while she was living in New York City. She replies, "Yes, I used to get all kinds of publications from here. One of the first things that really got me going were the things in The [Canadian] Forum.... Very deep, really searching things about the economics, I started to wake up then...."²⁴ In another interview, Wieland recalls that she "had been reading what the nationalist writers had been writing ... [and] realized that the statistics looked terrible in terms of Canada surviving as a nation."²⁵ She goes on to say that she "felt a sense of responsibility ... because I'd read about the American ownership ... [and it] made me feel that I should use all my resources for Canadian independence."²⁶

Wieland was clearly aware of the Waffle criticisms of American imperialism that were taking place in the Canadian press and academia, and they informed her own subjectivity and the ways in which she composed her works of art and the catalogue. Her inclusion of Thoreau's sentiment suggests that we can understand *The Water Quilt* as a politicized critique of American capitalist imperialism – this was Wieland's way of using nature to rebel. She purposefully

juxtaposes images of carefully embroidered flowers with the hand-drawn flowers of the original bulletin. Viewers are consequently faced with two visions of the Arctic: the federal government's reasoned categorization of the natural world via text and realistic imagery, and Wieland's politicized, equally realistic imagery that reveals the potentially destructive consequences to the Arctic if capitalism and American imperialism were to remain unchecked.

Her critique of the American exploitation of Canada's natural resources is also evident on a number of other pages. On page 214, rather than using photographs of her works of art, Wieland alters the original bulletin by including a handwritten sentence in the small space between two paragraphs, which reads, "The American military are in the Canadian Arctic." With this intervention into the bulletin's *technique*, she again critiques the reasoned and rational response to the natural world by the Canadian government. Her intervention appears in a section of the bulletin originally titled "Supplement" and under the heading, "Additions to the Known Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago." The "known additions" to the Arctic, as far as the Canadian government tells readers, are various flora such as *Festuca hyperborea* and *Puccinellia arctica*, while for Wieland, it is the American military.

On pages 198 and 199, she completely obscures the original text of the bulletin by handwriting (on page 198), and typing (on page 199), what appears to be a newspaper or journal article about American fisherman who stole seafoal eggs (which were sold for profit) from Nova Scotian fishermen. The American and Canadian fishermen decided to work amicably and share the eggs rather than "involv[e] the two great countries in war." Wieland's inclusion of this story is clearly allegorical, as it highlights the fact that discussion and negotiation among the Canadian and American fishermen was key to avoiding a war. She is perhaps suggesting that although American economic imperialism is threatening to the environment as well as to Canadian identity and nationhood, violence and aggressive force are not the way to combat the problem.

The other significant aspect of the catalogue is the way that Wieland explores Aboriginal (namely Inuit) identity and culture in relation to the theme of the book as land/nation. The first page of the book features a short passage in Inuktitut collaged over a page of the bulletin. On the following two pages Wieland typed the words to the Inuit song "The Great Sea" in French and English, and set these on two pages of the bulletin. On pages 4 and 5, she typed the story of "The Great Sea" on a piece of paper, which she then placed on a page of the bulletin, juxtaposing it with close-up shots of the 1970-71 wool-hooked work

²³ New Democratic Party, *For an Independent Socialist Canada: Waffle Manifesto and Some Supporting Resolutions* (Kingston: Queen's University, photocopy in W. D. Jordan Special Collections, Lorne Pierce, c. 1969), 3.

²⁴ Anne Wordsworth, "An Interview with Joyce Wieland," *Descant*, no. 8-9 (Spring/Summer 1974): 110.

²⁵ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 5.

²⁶ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/005, File 75.

Eskimo Song – The Great Sea, a photograph of an Inuit doll, and a newspaper clipping reporting the visit to Sachs Harbour in the Northwest Territories by Jean Chrétien, then minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In the interview conducted by Théberge, and in response to a question about whether “Eskimos” had particular significance for Wieland, she responds, “Yeah, because I envy some of the things they had in their past, their ingenuity, creativity, courage and innocence, and no corporate structure.”²⁷ She imagines Aboriginality in these statements in a way that romanticizes Inuit society and culture as pre-contact, and that draws on such anti-modern imaginings to politicize herself, and consequently her art practice, as anti-capitalist. In other words, this romanticized notion of Inuit culture as existing outside capitalist modernity is co-opted by Wieland in order to express her New Leftism.

Her imagining of Inuit culture as existing outside capitalist modernity is explored in several pages of the catalogue. The newspaper clipping on page 5 suggests that the construction of the Arctic that Wieland has presented to viewers is also one threatened by capitalist and colonialist exploitation. The newspaper clipping discusses the imminent ecological destruction threatening Sachs Harbour: “Mr. Chrétien tried,” it reports, “to reassure the Eskimos, not very successfully, and replied, when one Eskimo woman asked him, ‘What will be left of this island?’ ‘We don’t know.’” Wieland conveys to viewers the potential harm that will befall the Inuit of this particular community by drawing attention to the destruction of both Arctic land and the Inuit by technology and capitalism, which provokes a sympathetic response in viewers and positions Inuit culture as part of the natural world and as a victim of capitalist modernity. Wieland’s quilted, typed, and handwritten versions of “The Great Sea,” juxtaposed with the official government survey, co-opt Aboriginal culture as a form of resistance to capitalist exploitation – aligning it with such New Left notions of pacifism, respect for nature and the natural environment, and anti-capitalism.

While Wieland’s work engages with aspects of English-Canadian New Leftism, such as Waffle ideology, she also went on to explore Québécois nationalism and the *souverainiste* sentiments articulated by such radical New Left political groups as the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ).²⁸ This is not to suggest that her work can be understood as supportive of the FLQ’s *souverainiste* beliefs, but rather that it was sympathetic to their anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist causes. She clearly valued Quebec as important to her vision of nation; works such as *I Love Canada – J’aime Canada* (1970), which was exhibited

in *True Patriot Love*, proclaim her love for a bilingual, bicultural nation, and her handwritten marginalia in the catalogue always appear in English and French. Wieland’s use of language throughout *True Patriot Love* and in the catalogue is symbolic – by employing both English and French she acknowledges the importance of both cultures to her vision of the nation.

Just one year after *True Patriot Love*, Wieland made *Pierre Vallières*, a forty-minute film featuring Vallières, a member of the FLQ and the author of the controversial book *Nègres blancs d’Amérique: Autobiographie précoce d’un “terroriste” québécois/White Niggers of America*, which was published in 1968.²⁹ The film focuses exclusively on Vallières’ lips as he reads essays about the working classes of the Mont-Laurier region in Quebec; about history, race and separatism in Quebec; and about women’s liberation. He speaks in French, and an English translation appears in subtitles at the bottom of the screen.

Although he was not directly involved in the October Crisis, Vallières was an active member of the FLQ. In order to bring attention to the imprisonment of its members, Vallières and Charles Gagnon in 1966 embarked on a thirty-day hunger strike at the United Nations in New York City. They were subsequently arrested that September and held in prison for four months. On their release, American immigration officials illegally took Vallières and Gagnon to Canada, where they were arrested by the RCMP and imprisoned for nearly three years until their acquittal in 1973. It was during his four-month imprisonment at the Manhattan House of Detention for Men in New York City that Vallières wrote *White Niggers of America*. He portrays himself in the book as someone who has always lived at the margins of society and who has felt victimized throughout his life as a result of American and Canadian capitalism and colonialism. The way that Vallières draws on his own experiences growing up working class allows his reader to sympathize and identify with his subject position. This personal experience then shifts toward a justification for revolutionary action. He writes, “My itinerary from working-class slums to the FLQ was long and tortuous. For a workingman’s son, nothing in life is laid out in advance. He has to forge ahead, to fight against others and against himself, against his own ignorance and all the frustrations accumulated from father to son, he has to surmount both the oppression laid upon his class by others and his own congenital pessimism, to give his spontaneous revolt a consciousness, a reason and precise objectives. Otherwise he remains a nigger, he turns into a delinquent or a criminal, he consents to becoming at the age of 30 the ruin of a man ... a bitter and disenchanted slave.”³⁰

27 Théberge, “Interview with Joyce Wieland.”

28 Founded in 1963, the FLQ was a left-wing splinter group of the *souverainiste* party Rassemblement pour l’indépendance nationale (RIN). Throughout the 1960s and early ’70s, nationalism was growing in Quebec, and it was pushed to the extreme in more radical sects of New Leftism in Quebec such as the FLQ, which saw the sovereignty of Quebec as the only way to achieve a truly egalitarian society free of the fetters of Canadian (and American) capitalism and colonialism. The FLQ achieved its greatest profile in the public mind in October 1970, now referred to as the October Crisis. Members of the FLQ kidnapped the British diplomat James Cross, and shortly afterwards, the body of Pierre Laporte, a member of the Quebec Liberal cabinet, was found in the trunk of a car. On October 16, 1970, Pierre Trudeau, then prime minister of Canada, announced that the federal government had decided to invoke the War Measures Act, which briefly suspended all civil liberties. For further discussion of the FLQ, see Marcel Rioux, *La Question du Québec* (Paris: Seghers, 1971), and the English translation, *Quebec in Question* (Toronto: J. Lewis and Samuel, 1971); Robert Comeau, *FLQ: un projet révolutionnaire: lettres et écrits felquistes, 1963–1982* (Outremont, Québec: VLB, 1990); Louis Fournier, *FLQ: Histoire d’un mouvement clandestin* (Montréal, Québec: Québec/Amérique, 1982), and the English translation, by Edward Baxter, *FLQ: The Anatomy of an Underground Movement* (Toronto: NC Press, 1984).

29 Pierre Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, trans. Joan Pinkham (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1971), and Pierre Vallières, *Nègres blancs d’Amérique: Autobiographie précoce d’un terroriste québécois* (Montréal: Éditions Parti pris, 1968).

30 Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, 62.

The expression of such a position in *White Niggers of America* might explain why Wieland found Vallières a provocative filmic subject, and why her artistic exploration of his experience and Québécois nationalism are treated in a sympathetic manner. In an interview, she notes, "I feel mixed about some of the things he said [in the film], but I think that he's an interesting man and I think *The White Niggers of America* was a very important book." She goes on to say that *Pierre Vallières* was about "dealing with the mouth of a person that was put in jail without trial for three years."³¹ Her statement suggests that despite her apprehension, she felt it was important to allow him a platform from which to speak. While Vallières makes it clear in *White Niggers of America* that he supports Quebec separatism, this is not necessarily the focus of *Pierre Vallières* or what the film is really about.³²

The essays he reads in the film address issues related to working classes, women, French Canadians, Acadians, and Aboriginal peoples as oppressed groups within Canadian society – concerns to which Vallières both figuratively and literally gives a voice in the film: "I feel that women should unite and assert themselves with aggressiveness to help everybody free themselves from domination and repression. Just as colonized people, women need to use violence – often called aggressiveness in women.... I hope in my next book to be able to tell from a male point of view the effects on men of women's efforts at liberation, just as we Quebec people are working together to gain independence and build socialism. I hope that before long enough taboos will be abolished to permit men and women everywhere to begin to live on an equal footing, in complete freedom and with an equal measure of creativity."

Vallières's lips are active, speaking lips that fuse the sensory with the subject of the nation, in this case the idea that there are multiple nations within Canada that are marginalized. His lips are at once sensual and slightly repugnant – his teeth are yellow and stained, and as viewers are forced to watch only the mouth, they become increasingly aware of his saliva, the thick moustache hairs, the redness of his lips, and even his breath, rendering the image more and more grotesque over the course of the film. The film juxtaposes the idea of a public body, in the depiction of a well-known political radical, and a private body, in an intimate portrait of a particular person. This juxtaposition, along with the essays that Vallières reads, elicits a sympathetic response in viewers by constructing Quebec, and Vallières himself, as marginalized in Canada in the same way that women, Aboriginal peoples, and Acadians are. For Wieland, focusing on his lips helps to signify that he is working class – his accent, his bad teeth – which

31 Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 13.

32 Vallières writes, "Quebec separatism in itself is an excellent thing, and I support it 100 percent." Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, 226.

works to humanize him as a member of an oppressed group. Stripping Vallières of his FLQ association, his *souverainiste*-ness, and concentrating on his words – which tell of the multitude of anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist struggles occurring in Canada – and his lips – which evoke a sense of realness and humanness – make the film less about the radical Québécois nationalism associated with the man, and more about the effects of capitalism and colonialism on those groups who have suffered the most because of it. The grotesqueness also works to shift the public persona of Vallières from that of a radical separatist to a "real" human being; he is someone who lives, breathes, smokes and speaks; he has feelings, hopes, and beliefs.

Wieland's conceptualization of herself and her art practice as having the potential to shift viewers' thinking about deeply fundamental issues such as Québécois *souverainiste* sentiments, as well as national identity and unity, may reveal an overly optimistic or utopian desire. Her belief in the transformative and democratizing potential of the visual arts can be seen as part of a larger dialogue occurring during the late 1960s and early '70s regarding the importance of the artist and cultural production to understandings of individual subjectivity in a modernizing and increasingly globalized world.³³ Although utopian in its outlook, Wieland's work does not necessarily reveal concrete solutions to Canada's political, economic, or cultural problems but rather the potential for choosing the nation's future. Her catalogue suggests that ecological destruction and the annihilation of Aboriginal peoples could become a reality if capitalism and colonialism remained unimpeded, but it also makes clear that there is an option to prevent this outcome. Like *The Water Quilt*, the catalogue can be seen as a warning, as it plays out the possibility of a Canada that is beautiful and idyllic (evident in images of pristine snowy reaches and lush, verdant landscapes), and a Canada that is threatened by unchecked capitalism and colonialism. Confronted with these two potential futures, Wieland conveys to viewers that there is a choice, but one that must be made immediately. In *Pierre Vallières*, she offers viewers a similar choice – anti-separatist Canadians can choose to see the violent and destructive aspect of *souverainiste* ideology, or they can look beyond that public image and understand how English Canada has colonized French Canada (and women, Acadians, and Aboriginal peoples) in the same way that American imperialism threatens to colonize Canada. In all these instances, Wieland works to mediate and translate language, thoughts, and ideas of nation, citizenship, and belonging into an aesthetic experience. If we relegate her solely to the role of artist, we not only deny her artistic production the complex meanings that it engenders, but we also become complicit

33 The writings of Marshall McLuhan and Gene Youngblood, for example, sought to explain the relationship between the individual and the development of new media – film, television, and computer technology. See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1969/1962); Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); and Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton, 1970).

in upholding the realm of the *techne* that Wieland worked so hard to critique and subvert. It is therefore important for us as writers, curators, teachers, and theorists of culture to take the engagement and intentions of artists as cultural workers into account as we examine their practice.

The author would like to thank the former director of the National Gallery of Canada, Pierre Théberge, for taking the time to speak with her about *True Patriot Love* and his experiences working with Joyce Wieland, and Peter Trepanier, head of Reader Services at the National Gallery of Canada, for sharing his thoughts and insights on the exhibition and catalogue.

**A MEMORIAL
TO THE “ETERNAL
NETWORK”**

**Or the Unexpected Meeting of an Artist
and an Administrator in a National Institute
for Scientific and Technical Information**

ANNE
BÉNICHOU

"Ottawa is a city full of surprises!" laughed Glenn Lewis at my astonishment on discovering that in 1974 he had succeeded in realizing the *Great Wall of 1984*, a collective work stamped with anti-establishment spirit, within the strict official framework of a Ministry of Public Works' public art commission for the library of the National Research Council Canada (CNRC) in Ottawa. Located at the heart of the scientific complex which was inaugurated in 1973, the NRC Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (NRC-CISTI), formerly known as the NRC National Science Library, houses one of the most impressive expressions of Correspondence Art¹ produced by Canadian and international networks.

On the ground floor of this serious institution, Robert Filliou established some 752 square inches of territory of his inspired Republic; Kate Craig or her *character* Lady Brute deposited one of the drawings of rabbit heads dedicated to her by Ray Johnson and the Buddha University; her companion, Mr. Brute (Eric Metcalfe), put his saxophone into storage; Les petits bonbons collective celebrated the 1,000,011th anniversary of art, etc. The list of contributors is long since the *Great Wall* is a mural comprised of 365 Plexiglas boxes containing objects and prints sent to Lewis on his request by artists and collectives of the Correspondence Art networks.

The artwork composed of these miscellaneous artefacts is paradoxical in several regards. On the one hand, its counter-culture driven spirit is at odds with the official institutional context out of which it arose. This begs the question as to how Lewis managed to get approval for such a project within the framework of a government commission for the integration of art into architecture. One also wonders about his and the participants' motives in becoming involved in such an institutional project. On the other hand, the "material" nature and "monumental" form of the *Great Wall* are also surprising in the Correspondence Art context, seeing that the artists, like their colleagues in conceptual art, were turning away from the production of objects in favour of the circulation of ideas and information. Their activities generated publications and archive collections, but the realization of a work in the form of a perennial sculptural object was rare amongst them and may even seem opposed to the driving spirit of these artist communities and the ephemeral aesthetics that they had developed.

These contradictions dissolve as soon as one grasps the singularity of these artist networks in Canada, specifically in their very pragmatic dimension. While criticizing and parodying the art milieu, as well

1 I use the term *Mail Art* for convenience to qualify the work of artists who endeavoured to create communication tools and networks using the postal system. Several artists who participated in the *Great Wall of 1984* also practiced art parallel to the network, while others were only involved sporadically.

as its aesthetics, values, practices, and institutions, these artist communities were responsible for conceiving and establishing a new institutional landscape which is still ours today, by creating artist-run centres, then known as parallel galleries.

The decentralized *Eternal Network* – a continual interactive process between artists, imagined by Robert Filliou and George Brecht in 1968 on the closure of the *Cédille qui sourit*, a "non-boutique" dedicated to "permanent creation" – was beginning to materialize into legitimate institutions in Canada. Filliou realized this in 1973 during his first visit to the recently established Canadian artist-run centres. He immediately recognized the importance of his Canadian experience, of which he said, "There was no doubt that at that time, really I think the impetus for the actual creation of the Eternal Network has come from these people in Canada...."² As for the Canadian protagonists, they believed that Filliou and Ray Johnson's ideas had certainly contributed to the networks that were developing with the aid of institutions in Canada: "... Both Filliou and Johnson contributed a spirit and a style to an activity and an era which gave the network a legitimacy that otherwise could have been lost in the bureaucracy of its own making."³

It is due to this institutionalization of the Eternal Network at the beginning of the seventies that the *Great Wall* was to take on such significance, and that the paradoxes associated with it could seemingly be overcome. I will attempt to illustrate that Lewis's proposition marks the transition between two defining moments in Canada's contemporary art scene: the first being dominated by an experimental, anti-establishment model, infused with the spirit of the counter-culture, and characterized by flexible, ephemeral organizations, which materialized and dissolved according to personal affinities and potential projects, mimicking institutional organizations in a playful and parodical fashion, all while receiving the support of several official bodies. The second proceeded from an institutionalization of these flexible organizational forms into artist-run centres, regrouped into national and provincial networks, a development that was accompanied by the withdrawal of certain official institutions and a lack of support from those who maintained their allegiance. While this mutation allowed the artists to expand their field of expertise on the one hand, it also burdened them with a heavy administrative load for which they would now be responsible. Not only was the figure of the artist-administrator and manager thus consolidated, but an astonishing permeability between institutional and artistic practices was also established.

2 Robert Filliou, "The Propositions and Principles of Robert Filliou, Transcript from the Video *Portafilliou*," in *Robert Filliou: From Political to Poetical Economy* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 1996), 78.

3 Michael Morris and Vincent Trasov, "Letter from Berlin," in *Robert Filliou. From Political to Poetical Economy*, 73.

CORRESPONDENCE ART: A WHISPERED ART HISTORY

Lewis created the *Great Wall* within the framework of the New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, an informal network of artists brought together by him in Vancouver in 1970. Inspiration for the name came from Ray Johnson's New York Correspondence School. Lewis coupled New York with Vancouver in order to underline the idea of decentralization essential to the notion of the Eternal Network. The word *sponge* is an allusion to *Whispered Art History* by Filliou, who claimed that the first artistic gesture in the history of humanity was when a man dropped a sponge into a bucket of water on January 17, a million years ago.⁴ This reference underlines the desire to almost limitlessly extend the notion of artwork. The activities of the members of the New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver were primarily focused on performance and postal exchanges.⁵

The New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver did not however constitute an independent entity. The networks that developed between 1969 and 1974 merged, overlapped, and combined because their members wished to create an international community of artists in which the dissemination and sharing of ideas was the principle vehicle. As AA Bronson remembers, it was a question of creating a decentralized art milieu, a network based on an image virus, a parallel epidemic to the established art system.⁶ Also, the lists of members, projects, themes, and images were passed on from one network to another.

Closely interlinked, all of these networks exchanged their lists. From 1969, Morris acquired that of the members of the New York Correspondence School and used it for Image Bank. In 1971, this was augmented by several other important lists, including that of artist Ken Friedman, founder of Fluxus West in Vancouver. General Idea was to use the same list for the artist directory of *File*. It seems that Lewis also used it for projects of the New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, and consequently for the *Great Wall*.

The *Great Wall of 1984* is a manifest example of this fusion phenomenon. While artists from major networks of the period participated in it, it also contains references to notable projects that evolved during the early years of the decade. The title of the work and its reference to George Orwell's celebrated novel *1984* immediately associates the *Great Wall* with the project that Image Bank had launched two years earlier. In 1972, the collective launched this request for images around the theme of 1984: "Inventors of today are planning now

for tomorrow! Look into the future! Please send your image of 1984 to Image Bank." The reference to Orwell oriented the project towards the themes of totalitarianism, communication technology, and science fiction. Several participants, including General Idea sent media images from the fifties taken from sources such as *Life*, *Time* and *Fortune* magazines, illustrating the collective concepts of the future in post WWII society: the conquest of space, the happiness promised by consumer society, popular culture, and technological advancements. In an interview dedicated to Western Front during the summer of 1973, *Avalanche* magazine presented the Image Bank project as preliminary research for the *Great Wall*.⁷

At the same time, other projects were evolving around the theme of 1984. Gary Lee Nova photographed every house in Vancouver bearing the number 1984. In 1972, the Ant Farm collective realized a *Time Capsule* whose contents were not supposed to be revealed until 1984.⁸ Numerous projects of General Idea were based around the year 1984. For seven years, the collective organized rehearsals for *The 1984 Miss General Idea Beauty Pageant* and exploited the idea of ruins of the future with the Miss General Idea Pavilion whose vestiges dated to 1984.

Lewis worked the 1984 theme very openly. In his invitation to members of the New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, he played on the notion of time as portrayed on a calendar – the number of boxes for the *Great Wall* corresponded with the number of days in a year, with each box attributed the number of a year between 1620 and 1984. The numbers would, however, only appear on the boxes if an artist explicitly integrated them into his or her contribution. Chance would play a major role: 1620 happened to be the year the Mayflower landed at Plymouth!⁹ Lewis's proposal took up the notion of vestiges from the future visited in the projects of Image Bank, Ant Farm, and General Idea, since the artefacts deposited in the *Great Wall* would remain there permanently. Numerous participants explored this idea. Others, close on the heels of Image Bank's 1984 project, pursued their reflection on collective concepts of the future. A few others remained within the Orwellian spirit of counter-Utopia, perhaps due to the fact that Lewis integrated a reference to the Great Wall of China into the title of the work, and that at a time when Pierre Elliott Trudeau's government was in the process of renewing diplomatic ties with China.

A map indicating the origins of the participants of the *Great Wall*, drawn up after consulting Lewis's archives, illustrates the internationalization of the New York Corres Sponge Dance of Vancouver network. The majority of contributors were from the west coast of Canada or the USA.¹⁰

⁴ This reference is explained in E.E. Clair (pseudonym of Lewis), *Mondo Artie Episode no 1777*, 28 March 1973. Morris/Trasov Archive, Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia. 25.28, Box C. 14. Robert Filliou, *Whispered Art History. L'Histoire chuchotée de l'Art*. Artist book. Fine. C. Hiver, Siauve, F., 1994.

⁵ Every week, the members, wearing shark fin swimming caps, met during the free swim period at Vancouver's public swimming pool, the Crystal Pool, for sessions of synchronized swimming, the "swimming events" being a nod to the films of Esther Williams. Among the Mail Art projects of the New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver are *Better Body Works* at the Nova Scotia College of Art, Halifax, in March 1972; the *Trajectoire 73* exhibition at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, for which Lewis invited the members of the network to send "French letters, French kisses, French ticklers and French toast."

⁶ AA Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat: Artist-Run Centres as Museums by Artists," in ed. AA Bronson and P. Gale, *Museums by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 31.

⁷ Willoughby Sharp, "Business as Usual at the Western Front," *Avalanche* (summer-fall 1973): 4. I would like to thank Vincent Bonin for having drawn my attention to this interview.

⁸ It was finally opened in 2000.

⁹ The contents of box 1620 are directly related to this founding event in US history.

¹⁰ The quasi-absence of Québécois artists should be noted here.

Several European artists took part, including COUM, Blitzinformation and L'École d'art infantile; Robin Crozier, Robin Klassnik and Allen Jones from England; Robert Filliou and Ben Vautier from France; Beke Laszlo from Hungary, and William Louis Sorensen from Denmark; Rich Vermeulen from the Netherlands; Jochen Gerz and Klaus Groh from West Germany; Rita Morris and Helicopter Art Coy from Australia; Horacio Zabala from Argentina; Pedro Friedeberg from Mexico; and Gan Matsushita and Synzo Fujimoto from Japan. Although only approximate, the map nevertheless reveals the extent of the network. If one compares it to the one Michael Crane refers to in his essay "The Spread of Correspondence Art,"¹¹ despite several important absences, it reflects well the expansion of the Correspondence Art network, which in 1973 was active in Australia, Japan, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

The exchange of ideas, themes and personalities, as well as their circulation in networks for each member to adapt and transform as he or she pleased, is also palpable in the *Great Wall*. Many of the participants placed evidence of this communication and exchange in their boxes: lists of members, addresses of individuals and collectives, correspondence and requests for images. The work also illustrates the forms of recognition used by this community of artists; charged with innuendo, jokes, and coded language, the true nature of this work only reveals itself to the members of the network or those interested in it, and one's capacity to decode messages becomes a sign of its one's membership. The mural and invisible numeric system modelled on the calendar year devised by Lewis allowed for a non-hierarchical spatial organization of exhibits (each participant chose a date at will) and reiterated the compilation principle underlying the majority of Correspondence Art projects. The role of the compiler was reduced to assembling all of the submissions, without exclusions or all of the hierarchy. The use of a ready made system of organization seemed to guarantee this effacement.

Despite the apparent paradox that the choice of a monumental and perennial work constitutes, the *Great Wall* effectively embodies the spirit and values that were the driving force behind the Correspondence Art networks. It demonstrates to which point these practices broke down traditional conceptions of the author – the artist as creator – in the realm of the fine arts. All alternative forms of authorship were in evidence: the use of pseudonyms, anonymity, polyonymy, the collective, effacement, and incorporation. Moreover, the *Great Wall* was warmly received within artistic communities. It received the best correspondence artwork award at the *Decca Dance* event held in Hollywood on January 17, 1974.¹²

¹¹ Michael Crane, "The Spread of Correspondence Art," in ed. M. Crane and M. Stofflet; *Correspondence Art: Source Book for the Network of International Postal Art Activity* (San Francisco: Contemporary Arts Press, 1984), 133-197.

¹² The most imposing gathering of network artists, *Decca Dance* was a prize-giving ceremony parodying the Oscars.

The representation of the network emanating from Lewis's mural, in which anecdotes, gossip, legends, myths, inventions, innuendo, hoaxes, as well as important and derisory events intermingle indistinctly, evokes the "Whispered Art History"¹³ that Filliou imagined in 1963, a history without names, without works, without events, without important dates that only remind us that art is still very much alive.

A MUSEUM OF ARTISTS: NETWORKS IN DECLINE

In *Networked Art*, Craig Saper¹⁴ likens the artefacts circulated within artist networks to Roland Barthes' notion of the "receivable" due to their deliberately non-aesthetic quality. Barthes identifies three types of textual entities: the readerly, the writerly, and the receivable:

A *readerly* text is one I cannot rewrite (Can I write today like Balzac?); a *writerly* text is one I read with difficulty, unless I completely mutate my reading regime. I now conceive (certain texts that have been sent to me suggest as much) that there may be a third textual entity: alongside the *readerly* and the *writerly*, there would be something like the *receivable*. The *receivable* would be the *unreadable* text which catches hold, the red hot text, a product continuously outside of any likelihood and whose function – visibly assumed by its *scriptor* – would be to contest the mercantile constraint of what is written; this text, guided, armed by a notion of the *unpublishable*, would require the following response: I can neither read nor write what you produce, but I *receive* it, like a fire, a drug, an enigmatic disorganization.¹⁵

Based on this notion, Saper forged the concept of *intimate bureaucracy*, claiming that the circulation of this material creates an extremely personal, even intimate relationship between sender and receiver. It is therefore question of bringing impersonal transactions borrowed from the universe of bureaucracy into the sphere of intimacy. Although I have taken up Saper's reference to Barthes, I will use it very differently. The notion of the "receivable" conveys the idea of personal archives as a privileged destination for materials in circulation. One could in fact pursue Barthes' thought of "what I can neither read nor write, I receive" by adding that *I keep it*. Correspondence Art, following the example of many other ephemeral art forms, has in effect generated impressive corpora of documents, which the artists themselves have constituted, organized, and conserved in their homes and studios before submitting them to various institutions. In this

¹³ Robert Filliou, "Whispered Art History."

¹⁴ Craig J. Saper, *Networked Art* (London: University of Minneapolis, 2001), 3-4.

¹⁵ Roland Barthes, "Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes," trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 118.

manner, Morris and Trasov assembled the archives and activities of Image Bank. Stored for many years among administrative documents at the Western Front Society, they were transferred to the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery in 1992. Lewis conserved his archives at home until very recently when he too transferred them to the same institution. The *receivable* therefore stems from the moment when artists withdraw materials from the network to conserve them in private or transitory spaces. This is not archiving in the proper sense of the word; as Jacques Derrida evoked in *Archive Fever*, institutionalization is intrinsic to the notion of the archive. Not only does it offer *consignation* – an address – but also a system, unity, coherence. It guarantees its readability and hence its accessibility to the public.¹⁶

One might consider that from the time of the *Great Wall*, Lewis anticipated the question of the *consignation* of correspondence art. It permanently propels the receivable into an entirely public sphere, offering it a place, library, and system reminiscent of the universe of the museum, where artefacts and documents can be conserved and displayed. His proposal seems largely indebted to the *Artists' Museum* section organized by Harald Szeemann for *documenta 5* in 1972, which brought together five works in the form of fictitious museums: *The Box in a Suitcase* by Marcel Duchamp, *The Museum of Drawers* by Herbert Distel, *Mouse Museum* by Claes Oldenburg, *Section publicité du Musée d'art moderne Département des Aigles* by Marcel Broodthaers, and *Armoire pour Arman* by Ben Vautier. The works had a retrospective quality, with the artists presenting – in an often playful fashion – their earlier works (Duchamp, Broodthaers) or creative processes (Oldenburg, Ben). Following the example of Lewis, but embracing a different sense of the concept of the network, Distel created a miniature museum of international artists in a dry goods warehouse. Contrary to popular belief, which did without an analysis of this section, the *Artists' Museums* did not consist of an ideological critique of artistic institutions.¹⁷ Instead, they represented a willingness on behalf of the artists to extend their field of competence and claim greater intellectual responsibility and freedom in regard to the mediation of their work and its inclusion in the history of art. The artists were the curators of their own work, and in Distel's case, the work of other artists. The *Great Wall* clearly seems to fall within the scope of this type of approach.

Lewis found his inspiration in a painting from the beginning of the 19th century, *The Artist in His Museum* (1822), a self-portrait of Charles Wilson Peale unveiling the natural history Museum which he created in 1784 in Philadelphia and to whose development he dedicated

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 3.

¹⁷ Except for the work of Marcel Broodthaers.

his whole life. Ornithological specimens in horizontally organized showcases line the length of the left-hand and back walls of a long gallery. It is this device that Lewis integrated into the *Great Wall*. Peale's self-portrait was therefore more than just a source of inspiration. Lewis conserved a reproduction of the painting in his Ottawa project archives and had it published on two occasions in close proximity to the photograph of the *Great Wall*, first in 1979 in the *Art & Correspondence from the Western Front* catalogue,¹⁸ and then again in 1993 in a publication dedicated to Lewis by the Burnaby Art Gallery.¹⁹ The artist insisted on establishing a parallel between the two works. Two aspects of Peale's self-portrait seem particularly interesting in this regard: the dimension of memory and the artist as creator of his own museum.

The two works fall within the framework of a process of grieving, of renouncing the concept of knowledge and the democratic dream in the case of Peale, and the concept of art and culture for Lewis. Even if the museum is portrayed as being magnificent, it also shows signs of being scientifically outdated and suggests the failure of the political project that the painter cherished. The left and right sections of the painting reveal different scientific approaches; on the left, the evolutionary theory of the species and Linné's classification system that fall within the scope of Deism, widespread in Great Britain and the United States at the time. While admitting the existence of a divine creator, the Deists considered that human beings would succeed in mastering the natural world through science and technology. On the right side of the painting, a mastodon skeleton that Peale and his son had excavated in 1801 advances the hypothesis on the extinction of species. The presence of the mastodon, despite its being one of Peale's major scientific successes, suggests that the concept of the living, to which the museum is a response, is already dated.²⁰ Moreover, as Peale was working on this painting, he was on the point of losing one of his most significant political battles: his wish to transform his museum into a state-financed, public education institution, based on the European museum model.²¹ This was an extremely progressive concept at the time, he believed education to be a central goal of the democratic state. Despite all his efforts, Peale did not succeed in securing public funding, and in 1827, five years after painting his self-portrait, he resigned himself to moving his museum from State House (Independence Hall) to the Arcade Building, the first commercial centre in the United States, which was a difficult compromise between his scientific and democratic ideals and the consumer/entertainment society that was establishing itself.

Like *The Artist*, the *Great Wall* is a response to important transformations in the artistic scene, namely the decline of Correspondence Art

¹⁸ *Art & Correspondence from the Western Front* (Vancouver: Western Front, 1979), 44-45.

¹⁹ Glenn Lewis: *Utopiary, Metaphorest & Bewilderness: Works from 1967-1993* (Burnaby, B.C.: Burnaby Art Gallery, 1993), 62-63.

²⁰ On memory and grieving in the work of Peale: Susan Stewart, "Death and Life, in that Order, in the Works of Charles Wilson Peale," in ed. L. Cooke and P. Wollen, *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances* (Seattle: Dia Center for the Arts, Bay Press, 1995), 30-53.

²¹ On Peale's political thought: David C. Ward, "Democratic Culture: The Peale Museums, 1784-1850," in L.B. Miller ed., *The Peale Family. Creation of a Legacy 1770-1870* (Abbeville Press, Smithsonian Institution, 1996), 261-275.

and the mutation of informal and flexible networks into more organized institutions – artist-run centres. At the end of 1973 and the beginning of 1974, Correspondence Art ran out of steam. The network had become a victim of its own success. Several artists complained of the excessive quantity and mediocre quality of the mail they were receiving. The “compilers” were faced with the difficult decision of either reconciling themselves to selecting acceptable works or integrating works of lesser quality into their compilations.²² Finally, the creation of the first artist-run centres channelled the energy of several key figures. *A posteriori*, Michael Morris envisaged Correspondence Art as an intermediary step: “My major activities vis-à-vis correspondence art undertook a major metamorphosis with the development of artist-run spaces. Correspondence seems now like a very nice but transitional stage....”²³ This decline is palpable in the *Great Wall*. Several artists who had confirmed their participation and chosen their boxes never submitted their contributions,²⁴ while others never even replied. Lewis resorted to asking Morris for help in soliciting artists.²⁵ Despite all their efforts, 121 boxes were to remain empty.

Parallel to this disengagement, the extremely favourable rapport that had been established between official institutions and experimental artistic practices was deteriorating. In Vancouver, the artistic scene witnessed the disintegration of relatively informal production collectives, (which had nevertheless received the support of the official institutions), in favour of artist-run centres, which, despite their more permanent and developed structure and administration, did not benefit from the same official support. The disappearance of the Intermedia Society in 1972 and the foundation of Western Front the following year are emblematic of this phenomenon, as the new organization did not receive the same institutional support as its predecessor. As of 1975, the increase in the number of artist-run centres was so significant that the Canada Council for the Arts no longer had the financial capacity to adequately support their activities.²⁶ In 1974, the Vancouver Art Gallery cancelled its series of events dedicated to the parallel scene, and the University of British Columbia did not renew its teaching contracts with the artists that had been affiliated with Intermedia.

This new institutional landscape is inscribed on the *Great Wall*. On the one hand, numerous members of Western Front participated in the work, with artist centre in all likelihood having served as a platform for Lewis to manage the project. On the other hand, several other legitimate organizations also sent contributions the same way as artists, collectives, and fictitious companies, including the New Era

Social Club, the Western Front artist-run centre, and the Talonbooks publishing company. Various actors from the artistic milieu also participated, including Victor Coleman (under the pseudonym Vic D'or), critic at *artscanada* and founder of the publishing company Coach House Books; Willoughby Sharp, editor of *Avalanche*; bill bisset, founder of *blewointment*, a concrete and experimental poetry magazine created in 1962 and transformed into a publishing company in 1967. Yet it is above all the *porosity* between these artistic and administrative practices from which the *Great Wall* arose that seems characteristic of this period and its institutional mutations.

THE ARTIST AS ADMINISTRATOR: PERMEABILITY BETWEEN INSTITUTIONAL AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES

Although the programs of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Federal Government (Opportunities for Youth and Local Initiative Projects)²⁷ provided financing for a fair number of projects (among others those of Image Bank), they obliged organizations benefiting from them to be structured according to traditional administrative models, with a board of directors, director, and employees such as coordinators, secretaries, etc., who would be responsible for various everyday tasks. This marked the first step in the institutionalization of this experimental and informal artistic scene, and a shift in the ideals of counter-institutions from self-management towards more hierarchical structures. This period witnessed the emergence of a new type of artist, as well as an astonishing permeability between artistic and institutional practices.

The implication of the artists in the administrative process had consequences for their statuses and required them to considerably expand their fields of competence. From that time on, they would assume tasks that had traditionally been assigned to museum curators, gallery owners, or art critics. They took charge of defining how their work should be diffused, since the new functions and institutions they had created allowed them to author press releases, catalogues, reviews, and artist books; it also allowed them to organize exhibitions, etc.

Lewis is emblematic of this new figure. From 1970 to 1972 he sat on Intermedia's board of directors, and from 1973 to 1976 on that of the Vancouver Art Gallery. His implication in Western Front is significant: in 1974, he created the videographic section and administered it for

22 In an interview with Anna Banana, Gary Lee Nova explains the situation: Anna Banana, “Mail Art Canada,” in M. Crane and M. Stofflet, *Correspondence Art: Source Book for the Network of International Postal Art Activity* (San Francisco: Contemporary Arts Press, 1984), 250. According to AA Bronson, the travel grant program created by the Canada Council for the Arts at the beginning of the nineteen-seventies accentuated this lack of interest, since the artists could meet more easily: AA Bronson, 33.

23 Michael Morris cited by Michael Crane “The Spread of Correspondence Art,” 147.

24 This was the case for thirty boxes.

25 Letter from Flakey (pseudonym of Lewis) to Marcel (pseudonym of Morris). Morris/Trasov Archive, (file 32.6, box C21).

26 In the course of the 1975-1976 financial year, the Council for the Arts froze its funds for new artist-run centres, although they continued to support already existing centres. See *Artists' Centres: A Twenty Year Perspective 1972 to 1992*, (Canada Council, Visual Arts Section, September 1993), 2 and 5.

27 These programs were implemented by the Trudeau Government in 1972 and 1973 to offset the economic/unemployment crisis. They also facilitated a certain form of cultural decentralization.

two years; from 1977 to 1979, he was responsible for programming and performance; and from 1979 to 1987, he supervised the administration and general coordination of the organization. In the course of this long mandate, he introduced, among other initiatives, a new program: *Computer – Integrated Media*. In 1987, he was appointed head of the media arts section at the Canada Council for the Arts, a position he occupied for three years. Lewis also regularly organized exhibitions and events as curator, including the *Intermedia Dome Show* (1970) at the Vancouver Art Gallery; the *B.C. Open Art Race* (1974) broadcast on the CBC; and *Art & Correspondence from the Western Front* (1979). Moreover, Lewis played a key role in ANNPAC/RACA,²⁸ where he advanced the figure of the “artist-administrator” and “manager of his own destiny,” and encouraged “the emergence of the artist from exile into the palpable world of people, concerns and problems – reminiscent of a time when an artist was an integral and necessary part of the whole society.”²⁹

Besides the emergence of this new model of the artist, this period was characterized by an astonishing permeability between administrative and artistic practices. The two spheres of activity seemed to contaminate each other, as though a real distinction no longer existed between creative and administrative work. Not only did the projects, themes, personalities, and member contact lists circulate from one artistic project to another, but surprisingly, their artistic practices also spread to institutions.

The list of network members is an interesting example of this shift. After being circulated among various artist networks, it was used by *Flash Art*, *Who's Who in American Art* and *Who's Who in America*.³⁰ As Ken Friedman explains,³¹ if the elaboration of artist lists was originally a means of short-circuiting the stranglehold of institutions on this information and its hegemony in terms of diffusion, its reintegration into the institutional milieu ensured a form of control for artists over its dissemination.

The 1984 theme constitutes another interesting example of the permeability between works and institutions. When created by General Idea in 1974, Art Metropole structured its program of activities and institutional development around the year 1984. In a grant application submitted to the Ontario Arts Council in April 1974, the organization outlined its plan to document non-traditional artistic forms over the next ten years and to deposit them in a permanent location in 1984 – a program uniquely justified by the myth that the artist communities had created around this date.³²

28 In English: ANNPAC, *Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres*. In French: RACA, *Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatifs*.

29 Glenn Lewis, “The Value of Parallel Galleries,” *Parallelogramme*, Vol. 3, no. 2 (February 1978): 5–6.

30 For the itinerary of this list, see Ken Friedman, “The Early Days of Mail Art,” in ed. C. Welch, *Eternal Network: A Mail Art Anthology* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1995), 3–16.

31 Ibid.

32 Robert Handforth, grant application to the Ontario Arts Council. Art Metropole Collection, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, 30 April 1974. 6. I would like to thank Vincent Bonin for having drawn my attention to this document.

The artists did not content themselves with parodying or criticizing institutions from the outside but sought to infiltrate them to use them in new ways, and to create their own institutions at the heart of the existing artistic and cultural systems. The *Great Wall* seems emblematic of this complexity. While participating artists appropriated administrative practices, Lewis, for his part, in order to produce his work, designed a device with certain similarities to an institutional form. As a result, he managed to clearly articulate his project to the commissioning body of Public Works.

In the *Great Wall*, several interventions originate from the appropriation of the administrative and entrepreneurial universe. Fictitious companies, corporations and institutions abound, with names such as Hoo Hoo Archives, COUM, Gross Entreprises, Fat City School of Finds Arts, Les petits bonbons, etc., appearing on letterheads, envelopes, stamps, and certificates. In addition, the organization and logistics developed by Lewis in order to realize his mural resemble a form of administrative activity. The artist designed a series of printed forms and leaflets that he sent to around 400 members of the New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver. Aesthetically, they resemble regular administrative forms, but the artist endowed them with a “hand made” aspect that contradicts the rationality of their organization. The participants themselves also left their aesthetic mark on them by affixing their stamps, creating collages, and colouring in the boxes.³³

Lewis filed these forms in numerical order according to their box number. For every artist who responded to his call, he also set up a file with the artist's name and the number of his/her box typed on it, and created a second index filed in alphabetical order according to the artists' names. In addition, he typed a list with the same information and classifications, which he introduced as follows: “The following is a list of names with corresponding box numbers which shows who is cheek-to-cheek on the border-lines of their safety deposit boxes in the 1984 Wall at the National Science Library, Ottawa, to date.”³⁴ It seems fairly clear that the artist devoted himself with great pleasure to the list as well as the filing and organization of data.

These documents that Lewis preserved in his personal archives, never making them public, constitute a hidden yet fully integral part of the work. The integration of blank forms into the mural, in a smaller compartment conceived specifically for this purpose, clearly reveals the importance the artist attributed to them. Yet, these documents also fulfilled their administrative functions, since they facilitated the smooth running and effective management of the project.

33 Glenn Lewis's personal archives.

34 Ibid.

Lewis managed the Ottawa project with great skill, taking full advantage of the Public Works program. He benefited from the flexibility of this institution, which was still relatively new and more accommodating towards artists than the majority of government programs for the integration of art into architecture in effect today. Lewis knew how to take advantage of these favourable circumstances, just when the first signs of disengagement on behalf of the official institutions were beginning to be felt. The government program offered him both financial support and a sufficiently flexible institutional context for him to realize his project.

The Department of Public Works introduced the Fine Art Program in 1964, at the general request of the art milieu.³⁵ It endorsed that up to 1 percent of total construction costs for federal buildings be allocated to art works. The architects suggested artists, while a consultative committee, nominated for three years, ratified the choice of creators, the site for the works, and the proposed projects.³⁶ The architects and artists were expected to begin collaborating at the design stage of the building, so that the art works were not simply tacked onto the architectural space or reduced to being mere decorative elements.

At ICIST, however, things happened differently. The artists were integrated very late into the process. When the design of the science complex was entrusted to Toronto architects Shore Tilbe Henschel Irwin; in 1965, the NRC was reticent to take advantage of the Fine Art Program, which was still in its early stages. Chief architect Stephen Irwin and Earl Helland from Omniplan Design Group Limited, responsible for interior design; and Barry Briscoe, responsible for graphic signage, insisted throughout the project that the works be integrated into the building, all the more so since the interior design distinguished itself considerably from the contemporary aesthetic of libraries of the era.³⁷ The architects fitted out spaces likely to display the work, which only received approval in 1972, one year after construction had begun.

Seven works were realized with a budget of \$120,000 (for a total building cost of \$14.9 million): *The Great Wall of 1984* by Glenn Lewis, *Hanging Waves* by Kubota; *Banners* by Jean Noël; *Prairies* by Douglas Bentham; *Quilted Wall Hanging* by Joyce Wieland; *Elemental Murals* by Michael Hayden; and *Plants have feelings* by Robin Mackenzie. The selection accorded much importance to experimental practices.

The architectural firm coordinated the realization and installation of the works. The modalities of the commission privileged the

ideas of the artists without demanding that technical problems be resolved in advance.³⁸ As a result, the works could evolve during their realization. In Ottawa, Lewis waged that he could convince the committee to accept a collective project, which went against the grain of the program's mission to commission a work from a specific artist.

Lewis's first proposal submitted in 1972 did not in fact state the collective nature of the work:

(...) The intention is to make and or use objects that relate to information found in the Science Library, for example things from the natural world, sand and rocks, star charts, maps, antique instruments, etc., along with objects that I will manufacture probably out of porcelain similar in technique to my past work. I have inserted 365 boxes to correspond with the number of days in the year and will attempt to use the changing seasons and relate it to the information found in the boxes.³⁹

When the artist sent out a call for submissions through the network of the New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, the architects and personnel of the library, instead of being concerned, were inspired by the idea and asked to collaborate. A letter from Wenda Montgomery, secretary of architect Irwin, is very revealing in this regard:

Glenn, your method of participation in the furnishing of the individual boxes for the wall is of interest to us. We understand that these have scientific overtones and NRC. have expressed interest in filling several boxes. You also mentioned that we might be able to have one. Please let us know if this is possible.⁴⁰

This is why in the *Great Wall* there are several contributions from library employees, including head librarian Jack Brown, who supervised the construction of the new building and collaborated with the architects, and Tom West, head of administrative services, who worked with Helland on fitting out the interior. Plumbers from the worksite created a modernist sculpture out of copper pipes; one box was fitted out with carpet, while others were filled with electrical wires and wood shavings. One box was transformed into a scale model with two concrete columns and an assortment of electrical wires. Lastly, photographs of the new building, inserted in a Plexiglas cube, were dedicated to all the collaborators: "National Science Library. Presented to THE SURVIVORS of the construction period Aug. 10

35 This program was implemented six years after the Ministry of Transport's program, which was limited to airport construction sites, had been established for the construction of Gander Airport. The program was axed in 1978.

36 The consultative committee comprised Public Work's Chief Architect, a representative from both the Musée des beaux-arts du Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts, an art critic, an artist, and a member of the public; all Canadian provinces and the National Capital Region were required to be represented. In 1973, it included K.C. Stanley, Mayo Graham, Peter Bell, Jean-Louis Lalonde, Ken Lochhead, Suzanne Rivard Le Moine, Clifford Wiens, and Joan Lowndes.

37 Specifically in terms of the brightly coloured carpets, the organic forms of the signage and furniture, and the assorted lighting in the corresponding colours of each space. Unfortunately, only vestiges of the original design remain today.

38 The artists only had to guarantee that their work would last five years.

39 Glenn Lewis, *Project presentation text*, "National Science Library Fine Art Proposal Shore and Moffat and Partners," CNRC Archives, Ottawa.

40 Wenda Montgomery, *Letter to Glenn Lewis*, August 3, 1973. Personal archives of Glenn Lewis.

1971 to Feb. 10 1974 occupied Feb. 11 1974." The participation of people from beyond the artist community was one of the greatest successes of the *Great Wall*. It allowed two communities – that of the artists and the one created around the library construction site – to be linked together. Even today, the employees still enjoy telling their stories, or those of their predecessors, about the work. While realizing this generation of artists' wish to fuse art with life, Lewis invented new means of engaging institutions. Morris was not wrong when he wrote about the *Great Wall* in 1978: "The finished mural is the most anarchistic yet democratic and intelligent manipulation of official bureaucracy to date. It mirrors the complex implications of current artist/government interactions."⁴¹

THE ARTISTS' MUSEUM IN AN ERA OF INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE

Correspondence Art, in particular the way it is presented in the *Great Wall*, allows one to envisage other cases in the episode of late modernity where the rapports between art and institutions have been renegotiated. In his celebrated essay "From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,"⁴² published in 1990, Benjamin Buchloh envisages the *aesthetic of administration*, which he perceives in the conceptual art of the sixties as a manifestation of *institutional critique*, according to an interpretation of this period in art history, which is not without a teleological dimension. This critical dimension would validate the aesthetic of administration, or constitute its horizon – an outcome of sorts. In both cases, a judgement criterion emerges: the works that appropriate the administrative universe are pertinent in that they engender *institutional critique*.

This essay falls directly within the scope of many other anti-museum writings by artists in the late sixties and early seventies, including Daniel Buren, Robert Smithson, Hans Haacke, Donald Judd, Michael Asher, the Art Workers' Coalition, etc.⁴³ Buchloh's article has received exceptional critical acclaim and engendered a long genealogy of texts from theoreticians and artists alike, who not only adopted its terminology but also a fair number of its ideas. The symposium, *Institutional Critique and After*, held in 2006, bears witness to this, and the notion of institutional critique is meanwhile considered as an aesthetic and historic category in itself: a "movement launched in the late 1960s, redeveloped in the 1980s, and vigorously reoriented in recent years."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Michael Morris, "New York Correspondence School of Vancouver," *artscanada* 35 (April-May 1978): 43.

⁴² Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," in *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 105-143.

⁴³ The list is too long to include here. Kynaston McShine proposes an anthology of extracts of artists' critiques of the museum: "Artists on Museums: An Anthology," in *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 200-239.

⁴⁴ *Institutional Critique and After*, ed. John C. Welchman Southern California Consortium of Art Schools Symposium Vol. II (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2006).

Based exclusively on U.S. and European artists who enjoyed recognition in major artistic centres and were fundamental players in seminal institutions in the late sixties and early seventies, Buchloh's analysis can, however, only be applied with difficulty to the artistic practices born of the periphery, and hence to the Canadian context. Another limitation is the fact that it ignores Szeemann's research, which had nevertheless been widely disseminated as of 1972 through *documenta 5*, and which sketched a different perspective on the rapports between art and the institution of the museum. This impasse is all the more surprising since several pieces written "by artists considered to be founding members of institutional critique were published on the occasion of *documenta 5*, challenging both the curator/author figure and the anthropological bias of the exhibition."⁴⁵

With the *Artists' Museum* section, Szeemann invented new ways of articulating the prerogatives of artists and their ever-increasing sphere of action to that of artist-curator, a new figure in the institutional landscape of the era. Moreover, in the *documenta 5* catalogue, he advanced nothing less than that the critique of institutions era was over and that the art created in the early seventies was the art of the museum! "The rapport between the artist and the museum is once again self-evident and the signs already indicate that when we have cleared the museum of its odious reputation as a consecratory space, through the works it will again become the place it once was,"⁴⁶ namely a space for experimentation and freedom. Szeemann's position, anachronistic in the context of the seventies, is opposite to that of Buchloh. Szeemann perceives the end of institutional critique where Buchloh sees its beginnings. The curator refuses to reduce the museum to its consecratory and legitimating function, while the theoretician focuses his analysis on exactly this aspect of the institution.⁴⁷

Nourished by avant-garde culture, Szeemann seems to revive the dialectic and global *Living Museum* project, elaborated by Alexander Dörner at Hanover's Provincial Museum in the mid-1920s. Rejecting the vacuity and neutrality of the museum space, Dörner realized whole scenographies, which he named "tones of being,"⁴⁸ with the objective of restoring the socio-historical context of the works while provoking a multi-sensorial experience in the spectator. He involved contemporary artists in the conception and realization of the museological program, commissioning El Lissitzky to design an environment destined to exhibit abstract art – the celebrated *Abstract Cabinet*, and Moholy-Nagy, a multi-sensorial and multi-media futuristic space dedicated to contemporary art. With the

⁴⁵ Based around the theme "Inquiry into Reality – Today's Imagery," *documenta 5* embraced the ensemble of visual culture, bringing together artistic practices with non-artistic productions such as propaganda, advertising, kitsch, religious imagery, children's games, etc. Among the texts: Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement," in *documenta 5*. Exhibition catalogue. documenta GmbH/Verlagsgruppe Bertelsmann GmbH/C, 1972. Section 17. 74. This text is also reproduced in *Artforum* 11 (October 1972): 36; Daniel Buren, "Exposition d'une exposition," in *documenta 5*. Section 17, 29.

⁴⁶ Harald Szeemann, "Préface du catalogue de documenta," trans. Louise Ashcroft in *Écrire les expositions* (Bruxelles: La lettre volée, 1996), 28.

⁴⁷ In regard to Robert Morris, Buchloh writes that art had become "the ultimate subject of a legal definition and the result of institutional validation," since the work makes one see and reflect on the processes of legitimation of which it is the object, which rest neither on its visual qualities nor on its manual competence. Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969," 117.

⁴⁸ This is exactly what Szeemann did at *documenta 5* by proposing an "Inquiry into Reality."

"Artists' Museums," Szeemann brought Dorner's project up-to-date, underlining the fact that artists are in a position to create presentation devices that induce new readings and interpretations of the works.

Additionally, following *documenta 5*, in the spirit of the "Artists' Museums," Szeemann formulated the idea of an imaginary *Museum of Obsessions*, and created an actual administrative structure, the *Agency for Intellectual Guest Labour* serving the vision of a Museum of Obsessions. The *Museum of Obsessions* existed only in Szeemann's imagination, and consisted largely of an intellectual exercise of having "a new idea every night" without the necessity of actually bringing it to fruition. Should it be realized, it would take the form of an exhibition that the agency would realize with the help of legitimate museum institutions (museums, art galleries, exhibition centres, biennials, etc.). Szeemann's lengthy descriptions of his museum and agency are not only evocative of the parodies of institutions written by the Collège de Pataphysique (on which he wrote his doctorate) but also of the "Artists' Museums" and the Correspondence Art networks. Like them, his museum and agency parody institutions, while articulating and generating new institutional forms:

I have an idea. I hire myself, as an Agency for Intellectual Guest Labour, to realize the idea. The Agency for Intellectual Guest Labour creates the stimulus and the context and commissions me to work out the concept. I then order the agency to carry it out. The Agency for Intellectual Guest Labour informs me that I am the only person qualified for the job. I ask the agency what resources are available. The finance department informs me that there are neither funds nor personnel available, at least not at the present time. Strenuous meetings involving executive and legislative bodies as well as financial experts lead to a passage of the following resolution: If I am willing to realize the idea, the others will respect the decision and go along. Since the decision is ultimately passed down to me by the agency, and because I am the agency, I accept the commission to carry out my idea. From that point on, everything goes without a hitch. I make decisions on behalf of the agency and serve as my own staff, at least until the preparation phase begins, after which nothing more can be done without assistance from the others.⁴⁹

The museum/agency dialectic is an alternative solution, both imaginary and real, to the traditional and official institutional world of art from which Szeemann wished to distance himself, all while continuing to work within it.

49 Harald Szeemann, "Agency for Intellectual Guest Labour," in *Harald Szeemann: with by through because towards despite, Catalogue of all Exhibitions 1957-2005*. (Zurich: Edition Voldemer, Wien and New York: Springer, 2007), 280.

The *Museum of Obsessions* can not be reduced to an apolitical overvaluing of individuality; it is "eminently political," wrote Szeemann,⁵⁰ outlining an intellectual filiation between the notion of obsession and the celebrated work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, published in 1972.⁵¹ At the heart of Szeemann's museological work is desire, not as a natural state of individuality, but in terms of the rapport that an individual maintains with reality and the institutional world. Both imaginary and real, while privileging the positive, multiple, flux, nomadism, difference, and proliferation, the *Museum of Obsessions* does not confine itself simply to forms of representation but it also establishes a dynamic between thought and action.

Szeemann's ideas seem to have had a major impact in Canada, and it seems that he also participated in the network, since the curator's name and request appear in the *International Image Exchange Directory*.⁵² Evidence of his influence is manifold. As we have seen, the *Great Wall* reveals affinities with *documenta 5*'s "Artists' Museums." Several manifestations of Correspondence Art, including the *Great Wall*, and the organizations arising from it, depend on the porosity of artistic and institutional practices evoked by the simultaneously real and imaginary status of Szeemann's museum/agency. The book *Museums by Artists*, published by Art Metropole in 1983, grants Szeemann a privileged position.⁵³ While its title evokes the "Artists' Museum," a whole section is dedicated to the curator and reproduces in part two of his texts on the *Museum of Obsessions*.⁵⁴

Yet it is above all in the virulent debate following the networking of the parallel galleries with the creation of ANNPAC/RACA in 1976 that Szeemann's thought seems to have played an important role, even though this has never been directly acknowledged. In 1978, in an article entitled "The Value of Parallel Galleries,"⁵⁵ published in the journal *Parallelogramme*, Lewis defines ANNPAC/RACA – which constituted a supplementary step in the institutionalization of the alternative scene – as the "Living Museum Network of Canada." In his long plea for improvements in the financing of artist-run centres, Lewis exposes the precarious financial position of the organizations and their employees, the *artist-administrators*, and laments the fact that public financing favoured historical heritage to the detriment of living culture. The network proposed by Lewis aimed to relieve artists of their heavy administrative burden, which was distracting them from creation, by sharing resources and means:

50 Harald Szeemann, "Museum of Obsessions," 374.

51 Harald Szeemann, "Agence pour le travail intellectuel à la demande au service de la vision d'un Musée des obsessions," in *Écrire les expositions* (Bruxelles: La lettre volée, 1996), 51.

52 *International Image Exchange Directory* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1972).

53 Bronson and Gale, *Museum by Artists*. Gale writes in the introduction: "In a discussion of museums by artists, Harald Szeemann plays a unique part – both for his presentation of such works in *documenta 5*, 1972, and also for his inspirational role within the European artistic and museum community," 10.

54 Harald Szeemann, "Museum of Obsessions: Proposal for an Exhibition at the Academy of Art in Berlin," and "Museum of Obsessions: Proposal for a Future Documenta," in Bronson and Gale, *Museum by Artists*, 271-281.

55 Glenn Lewis, "The Value of Parallel Galleries," *Parallelogramme* 3, no. 2 (February 1978): 6-12.

The Living Museum Network of Canada is a communication tool in the arts; it provides information where, when and how it is needed through exhibitions, multi-dimensional-interdisciplinary-cross-cultural projects, publications and distribution and sales of products; it deals with the living heritage as artistic and contemporary issues; it changes as society changes. As a museum it is the traditional starting point in all its ramifications and variations, and as a network it exists in Parallel Galleries and other centres across the nation, connected by communication systems. This museum would not have a building, a collection or much equipment of its own. It might have an office. It would exist as an association of autonomous artist-run centres as they are already constituted. Properly designed, the Living Museum Network would [...] take most of the administrative load off the artist-administrators in each centre for travelling shows and performances, larger cross-community projects, and the distribution of products and publications.⁵⁶

Although his proposition is very pragmatic, Lewis reaffirms the filiation of this new organization with the artistic project of the *eternal network*, playing once again on a voluntary confusion between institutional and artistic practices:

ANNPAC developed out of the consciousness of an informal network of artists across the country in touch with each other through correspondence, meetings, exhibitions and performances. Even before this, there was a creative network through correspondence, sometimes called "correspondence art" but which Robert Filliou in France calls the "eternal network" and goes on to say that it has replaced the concept of the "avant-garde." He credits Canadian artists with giving real strength and value to this concept of a network of art and artists. It took off in Canada and has been the mainstay of an international artists' network ever since. Many of these artists were germinal to the establishment of the Parallel Gallery system.⁵⁷

The use of the word *museum* in Lewis's proposition may seem surprising and antithetical to the universe of artist-run centres, and he was indeed sharply criticized by several protagonists on this account: Bronson saw an excessive adherence to bureaucratic models (which he associated with the protestant work ethic) and the nationally funded cultural character.⁵⁸ Diana Nemiroff commented, "It is a gloriously perverse attempt to institutionalize the anarchistic, decentralized 'eternal network' by installing a head office."⁵⁹ Yet the notion of the museum advanced by Lewis seems to me to be impregnated with the

thought of Szeemann and his agency/museum dialectic. In Lewis's view, there was no paradox in articulating the museum in the context of the eternal network.⁶⁰

Following the example of Szeemann, Lewis wished to articulate artistic and institutional forms, both real and imaginary, in order to invent a new institutional landscape bordering on the limits of utopia. Intermedia marks the advent of this dream, and ANNPAC/RACA its decline. Between the two, the *Great Wall* constitutes one of the works that best embodies not only its ideas but also its limits and paradoxes.

The author would like to thank Glenn Lewis for opening up his personal archives and for his generosity in allowing her to plum his past; Krisztina Laszlo, archivist at the Belkin Art Gallery, who guided her through the Morris/Trasov fonds; Stéphane Lévesque of the National Research Council of Canada, who facilitated access to the *Great Wall* and to the NRC archives; and Anik Glaude and Anne-Marie St-Jean Aubre for their invaluable help towards research.

⁶⁰ Lewis's proposal copies that of the network of the National Museums of Canada, which received the majority of the federal budget for culture, so Lewis created his counterpart for living culture with the aim of receiving more favourable financing.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁸ AA Bronson, 35-36.

⁵⁹ Diana Nemiroff, "Par-al-lél," in Jessica Bradley and Lesley Johnson, *Sightlines* (Artexte Editions, 1994), 180. This text was originally published in *Parallelogramme* 9, no. 1, 1983.

**COLLECTIVE
DYNAMICS
AT VIDÉOGRAPHE
(1970-1975)**

MARION
FROGER

In *Canada Trajectories 73*, the catalogue to an exhibition of Canadian art held at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, Normand Thériault remarks: "the history of artworks and of artistic productions cannot be written without considering the contribution of groups."¹ Indeed, the reasons underlying such an assertion can be found in a series of circumstantial factors: namely, Canadian artists do not operate within a makeshift world comprised of patrons who commission works, institutions that set the criteria of merit, and receptive communities. As a result, artists have had to create their own production and dissemination structures by forming collectives and establishing interdisciplinary networks to share production costs (which were only to increase with the advent of new electronic media) as well as the risks related to their status (i.e., as unproductive workers poorly integrated into the traditional social fabric of family, religious, professional, and associative institutions, etc.). Moreover, the emergence of such groups can be further understood in light of the political context of the time: in the wake of the 1951 Massey-Lévesque Report, the Canadian government was essentially preoccupied with the viability of artistic practices in a Canada with a restricted cultural "market." Following the Second World War, this question of viability became a political issue of prime importance. It bears mentioning that Canada's signing of the UNESCO Charter – which regards the arts as an important means for the protection of democracy – and its search for a cultural identity able to reinforce the very political existence of the country on an increasingly significant international scene contributed to establishing the idea that the State ought to massively subsidize artistic activities. Thus, the Canada Council for the Arts was created in 1957; its mandate, "to favour and promote the study and dissemination of the arts, and the production of works of art," was embraced not without sparking some reticence on behalf of Canadian artists – especially those from Quebec – who were wary of the Federal Government's new role as patron.

At the beginning of the 1970s, important discussions were held in view of endowing artists with a social status that would afford them access to financing by means of various types of competitions. Governmental institutions and artists, however, clearly did not agree on what this new status would imply, as the *Bobo-Z-Arts* interviews reveal (Charles Binamé, *Le vidéographe*, 1971).² During the same period, support for the creation of production, dissemination, and conservation infrastructures was also a matter of debate: the various communities involved petitioned the government for funds for the development of folk art and questioned the fact that financing was allocated to large companies in that sector. Ultimately, artists

¹ *Canada Trajectories 73* (Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1973). Published in conjunction with the exhibition held between 14 June and 15 August. Curator: Suzanne Pagé.

² Interviews with Guido Molinari, Ulysse Comtois, Pierre Lafleur, Yvon Cozic, René Derouin, Gérard Tremblay, Serge Toussignant, Guy Montpetit, Pierre Évart, Peter Gnass, and Serge De Laval.

³ For a definition of the term "art world," see George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974) and Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

⁴ The list of the first videos tapes produced by Vidéographe in 1971 clearly shows a willingness to give a voice to the voiceless. *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu pour que ça arrive rien qu'à nous autres des affaires de même?* (Yves Chaput, 1971) sets up a popular tribunal on the subject of abusive imprisonments during the October Crisis; *Des enfants pour le kik* (Jacques W. Benoit, 1971) allows a group of young adults to produce their own fiction to talk about their relationship with their parents; *Je suis de Ste-Scho...* (Henri Stadt, 1971) portrays a man from Sainte-Scholastique, a town set to disappear due to the future construction of the prestigious international airport; *Grève Campbell* (C.A.C. Chibougameau, 1971) gives a voice to striking factory workers and endeavours to show the solidarity of their community. One could also mention in this respect the films that will be later discussed: *Le pois fou* (Fernand Bélanger, 1971); *Les hiboux s'ont-ils mous...* (Pierre Veilleux, 1971); *Mass-médias* (Collective, 1971); and *Les Knock-outés* (Lyse Gagnon, 1971).

resisted the professionalization of their activities according to models which were not particularly compatible with the dynamics of creation. Meanwhile, artists' groups were quick to learn the language of politicians as they adopted lobbying practices with the aim of demonstrating that one ought to take the contributions of artistic activities into account when calculating the shares of the social, to put it in the terms of Jacques Rancière. Thus, they endorsed the process of legitimizing the public financing of art in light of the latter's cultural, social, and political benefits. Such is the very substance of what artists' groups communicated to the various public organizations likely to support them.

In Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, artists did not unite for purely political or economic reasons. Their social and artistic reflections led them to adopt a collective *modus operandi* in matters concerning production and dissemination; as a result, cooperative infrastructures based on the principles of free access and community ownership of artworks were established. It is in this context that artists paid great attention to the audiovisual documentation not only of performances, but also of the discussions and events that brought them together. The signs and energy of such events were captured in order to redistribute them into the social sphere, much in the same way as the artists' administrative and networking infrastructures attempted to impose an alternative socio-economic functioning onto the "art world."³

The creation of Vidéographe in Montreal in 1971 is to be read in light of this state of affairs. Vidéographe's structure, however, was not initially conceived to serve the interests of artists' groups. In fact, Vidéographe's founder Robert Forget had proposed to the NFB that an organization be created to allow youth, women, workers, or political groups to produce videos which would enable their voices to be heard.⁴ Such a proposal was not without a framework though, for the projects chosen by the programming committee were supported in the writing and editing phases, and then collected and distributed by the organization by means of its *vidéothéâtre* and cassette duplication service to serve the needs of the community. Vidéographe thus represented the "cooperative and popular" face of the NFB, which was free of political tutelage. Throughout this period Robert Forget was a master strategist, for he took advantage of the favourable stance towards social documentary filmmaking within the NFB and successfully obtained financing to establish an autonomous structure from the very federal agency that was piloting his *Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle* program. Although the agreement was short-lived (it ended in 1973), it lasted long enough for Vidéographe to become well-established in Montreal with its street-level location on rue

Saint-Denis. Vidéographe played several cards at once: artistic experimentation, politics, and education, as testified by the centre's productions and, more importantly, its endeavours to secure operational funding from government agencies.

But whom did this new structure welcome? It fostered apprentice journalists attempting to distinguish themselves by means of counter-information practices (*Mass-Média*, 1971; *Les Knock-outés*, 1971); young filmmakers who were learning the tools of their trade (Robert Favreau, Roger Cantin, Richard Boutet, Paul Tana, and André Mélançon all produced their first videos in 1972–1973); women fighting for the improvement of their rights; left-wing militants who were discovering a new medium (the video artists who founded the Groupe d'intervention vidéo in 1975 stemmed from Vidéographe) and the spokespersons of diverse groups who were sensitive to the bonds being forged and the collective life being lived there. Fernand Bélanger filmed the youth of the era (*Le pois fou*, 1971); Pierre Monat recorded the discussions of the revolutionary rearguard of the 1960s, thereby questioning its role and examining the new generation's political commitments (*Vive les animaux*, 1971); Claude Bond committed to tape creative collective practices, such as those of the *Grand Cirque Ordinaire*, which were inspired by the challenge to reinvent human relations (*Improvisation*, 1971). Marcel Fraser and Richard Larose (*Y'a du dehors, dedans*, 1973) as well as Michel Di Torre and Raymond Gervais (*Ce soir on improvise: nouvelle musique au Québec*, 1974) captured the performances of the *Quatuor de Jazz libre du Québec* and its attempt to inflect the collective emotions that arise when listening to music.

Video, which is a medium at the crossroads of all of these divergent interests, became essential to the dynamics of solidarity achieved through collective projects that are characteristic of the era,⁵ for it allows one to document, by means of live recordings, all types of collective experience (strikes, cooperative efforts, creations) and to re-introduce the vision of younger generations and artists into existing social networks. In front of the camera, solidarity speeches became quite heated, especially when it came to supporting workers on strike. Yet beyond such discourse, new relational experiences were being attempted, particularly in the artistic milieu, by addressing the modes of participation that the medium of video affords its actors and spectators. Thus, a change was effected in the field of videography: while setting aside practices of alternative reporting and recording events, video practices embraced a more subtle function, namely that of documenting social relations that strive to invent themselves in front of and through the camera.

5 In the Vidéographe archives there is also a tape dedicated to different types of community experience that bears witness to this dynamic: *Si on s'ymettait... (l'expérience communautaire)* (André Delisle, Michel Légaré and Charles Sénécal, 1973).

6 See Marcel Fraser and Richard Larose, *Y'a du dehors, dedans* (1973); *Ce soir on improvise: nouvelle musique au Québec* (1974).

7 In an article published in *CinéJazz*, Jean Préfontaine, saxophonist with the Quatuor du nouveau Jazz libre du Québec, explains that each member played "solo while listening to what the other three musicians were playing.... Our motto is one for all rather than all for one. Archie Shepp likes having a simple background to set off his solos; we try to be free together. When we're playing well and, above all, towards the end of the evening, we reach such a degree of cohesion and unity that we make enormous contrasting adjustments in very little time. Each musician seems to foresee what the others will do and everything works." *CinéJazz* 1 (1968): 34. The magazine only produced one issue, which is preserved in the Archives nationales du Québec.

In this respect, Quebec's music scene played an avant-garde role. The improvisation groups that had formed in this period became the subject of several videos,⁶ for they fused a collective mode of operation with the practice of public performance and a social vision of artistic practice. It suddenly seemed obvious that video documentation was not simply aimed at recording its subjects for the purposes of archiving or promotion. The question then arose: What exactly was being documented? Ultimately, the power of video is understood to reside in its ability to document a relational experience that is played out in front of the camera and which becomes a model of sociability. All of the videos of the period that captured collaborative practices, performances, or mere discussions between artists or intellectuals are in fact conceived according to this model. Musical improvisation sessions, moreover, were taken to be exemplary in this respect. For instance, in *Ce soir on improvise: nouvelle musique au Québec* (Michel Di Torre, Raymond Gervais, 1974), the camera follows the performances of each musician as it attempts to translate the invisible bonds that link the instrumentalists to one another. Is each musician focused solely on the sound that his or her instrument produces or, alternatively, is each musician in tune to the sounds produced by the others? Creative listening is thus ultimately both a means of creation and the end of the creative act: what matters is the degree to which one has refined one's capacity for listening, which manifests itself in the musicians' ability to anticipate the course of the improvisation, especially in situations in which the development of musical ideas is unpredictable.⁷ Recording performances by such musical improvisation groups particularly emphasizes this process of mutual listening. Such a process makes frequent use of close-up shots of the musicians joined together by panoramic shifts. In the absence of signs of complicity between the musicians, mutual listening is to be intimated from images of each musician concentrating, as well as from sweeping shots and editing techniques through which otherwise invisible connections become apparent.

This era is also marked by a search for new community metaphors; human relations are conceived in terms of a stream in motion. Thus, a group's harmony is not understood as existing prior to the group itself, but rather as something that arises during performances or that becomes an integral part of what one ought to feel while listening to music. In *Y'a du dehors, dedans*, a free-jazz musician from Quebec City evokes with great satisfaction the reaction of a fifty-year-old worker who had been exposed to the former's music by chance. It was hoped that the collective emotion resulting from these improvisations had a completely different quality than that provoked by

traditional popular music concerts. It had to cut to the quick and draw listeners away from the comfort of melodic satisfaction in order to convey a desire for creation and self-invention within the dynamics of a group.

By definition, most videos produced at Vidéographe between 1971 and 1974 are in fact the work of "amateurs;"⁸ the relation between camera and model is not obscured as is the case in professional videos, which are preoccupied with media transparency. One's relational experience with the camera is documented and the editing process strives to preserve it. This camera-subject relation (or cameraman-subject relation) draws at the same time a relational portrait of the protagonists involved in a given video. In *Les hiboux s'ont-ils mous* (Pierre Veilleux, 1971) a troop of young artists (including Michel Rivard and Serge Thériault) erect and dismantle stage sets, rehearse their parts, discuss their itinerary, and mock the artistic pretensions of the cameraman by giving him the nickname "Monsieur Godard." In fact, the cameraman is stigmatized since he is the group's outsider who only thinks of filming while the others work. But these "others" seem nervous, for they are undertaking their first provincial tour with the help of a youth grant program. They still have to prove themselves as artists before a slightly incredulous public gathered in schools, gymnasiums, and modest community halls. The camera compels the protagonists to show off, and the director endeavours to capture not only the performance itself, of which the viewer only gets to see fragments, but also the tensions, complicities, and aggressions – on which the director plays – which are the driving force of the group. The result is ambiguous, since it not only presents the utopian nature of all collective undertakings (i.e., to produce one's own community by means of the videographic project itself, which consists in following the group), but, it also reveals the opposite side of that vision, namely a somewhat artificial relational experience that takes shape by means of a set of fortuitous circumstances (i.e., the grant program), a good-natured public, and a journey across Quebec.

Another video on youth, *Le pois fou* (Bélanger, 1971), presents a very different relational dynamics. It also focuses on a small group of adolescents. In the first scenes the protagonists wander aimlessly on horseback in a forest; they are conscious of the camera. They then spend some time in the company of an old woman who hums songs from her youth, take part in the day's protests, and finally make themselves up to receive a youth creation prize along with Fernand Bélanger – the "Academy Award," which is given to them by Sydney Newman at the NFB offices. It is clear that they expect the camera

to capture the pleasure they are taking in spending time in each other's company. However, those not involved in their group dynamics seem to feel that the entire process is at their expense. For instance, before accepting to sing on camera the old woman looks into the lens and addresses the cameraman directly to find out if the adolescents are mocking her. But the opportunity to exchange with the young people behind the camera is finally too great, and the camera becomes the pretext for an improbable relationship, for its very presence embodies an interest which she embraces with gratitude. Sydney Newman's reaction, however, is quite different: surprised by the masquerade unfolding before him in his office as he carries out official business (i.e., awarding an "Academy Award" to Fernand Bélanger for his NFB-produced film *Ty-peupe*), he nonetheless struggles to keep his composure. It bears mentioning in this respect that the Vidéographe archives contain a formal notice addressed to Robert Forget in which Sydney Newman demands that this sequence of the film be removed. The notice goes as far as to question the NFB's support for Vidéographe under the pretext that this shot does not respect the rules of professional ethics.

In this context the camera allows a new dynamics of power to establish itself, for the camera no longer represents the "objective lens" that embodies the third term in hierarchical games of sociability between generations, classes, or genders. In fact, most of the videos under consideration differ from professional documentaries or reports precisely with respect to the question of camera-subject relations. At the time, it felt natural, in front of official media cameras, to keep one's composure, watch one's language, play one's role of manager, boss, intellectual, or notable. In Vidéographe productions, however, such behaviour was out of place. This is very clear in *Mass-Média* (1971), one of the first videos that addresses the October Crisis by denouncing the media's role throughout the event. Michel Chartrand's lengthy interview in which he talks with his interlocutors with his usual verve and frankness, by using phatic effects, makes segments of press directors shown in parallel seem pompous and ridiculous.

Scenes depicting informal conversation between friends allow one to convey – besides the subject being discussed – a model of sociability that pertains to the "like-minded" and gives the impression that the videos are filmed in an intimate setting from which those outside the production process are excluded. Such is the case with *Vive les animaux* (Pierre Monat, 1973), a video which ends with an open conflict between the male intellectuals leading a set of debates and the passive, silent female spectators who, after finally having had their

8 "Vidéographe is based on a triple hypothesis: 1) non-professional citizens who have something to say; 2) what they want to express is of interest to a significant segment of the population; 3) an economical and easy-to-operate audiovisual medium allows the participants' intentions to take shape by means of half-inch video tapes." Vidéographe Archives. Internal document. *Fiscal Years: 1971-1975*, 1.

say, are excluded from the discussion due to their lack of communicational ethics. In fact, aside from videos made by women on women's issues (*Lesbian Mothers*, Rita Moreira and Norma Pontes, 1972), most interviews and discussions took place between men. In *Bobo-Z-arts*, children can be heard in the background; one need not ask where the women are. There are beer bottles on the table, cigarettes are smoked with delight, and the rocking chairs are swinging; it is time to relax, for the women are busy in the background. Such is the disagreeable impression that is ultimately produced by this type of conversational video: there are those who discuss at leisure, and others, who sadly remain off-camera.

The general problem of the exclusion of those who did not partake in the production process – the “are nots” – cannot be underestimated. For Vidéographe seeks to rekindle the idea of community, which was shattered by the dislocation of traditional social relations (be they rural or related to religious congregations), as well as by the shock of industrial development and the expansion of mass media and consumerism as the sole means to establish cultural bonds. Thus, Vidéographe's production support and community distribution projects were based on a social utopia. In the minutes of a three-day meeting held before Vidéographe was launched, Robert Forget describes the role of the organization in the following terms: “To manage to work as a team in a way I have never experienced before. In other words: with a non-hierarchical structure and a mechanism for collective exchange, communication, and evaluation.”⁹ If videos are an opportunity to live this type of experience, it is important for the public to see them, its distribution must create an alternative space, and its projection unite a community. These are the reasons why screenings were scheduled every Monday at the *vidéothéâtre* (at least in the beginning),¹⁰ and were accompanied by live commentary by the video-makers and were hosted by a cinema director. A cassette duplication service was created as well as a distribution network that made use of the existing community television stations” so that access to videos was based on the same principles as their production process, namely, the collective use of communal property.

The cassette distribution policy was linked to that of production. Perhaps it was naïve to think that the exemplary nature of the collective enterprise relating to the production of the videos could reach a larger public than those persons involved in the creation process. In fact, it was felt that emphasizing the collective undertaking itself and its results was sufficient. One must bear in mind that Vidéographe stems from a process of reflection on the social function of the

documentary that was developed by the NFB's social research group in 1967.¹² This group had promoted the fight against poverty in a way that was far removed from the aims of the existing social assistance programs. They sought to raise the awareness of the population to modern means of communication so that everyone could participate in the “ambient social process.”¹³ The experimental approach proposed most notably by Maurice Bulbulian on behalf of this group consisted in asking destitute people to “create a film in which they attempt to analyze their situation in their own fashion.”¹⁴ For Bulbulian, everyone would benefit from this process: i.e., persons who were making their first film as well as the filmmakers who were unlearning to communicate in their usual professional jargon. The films made by this group revealed to its members to what extent video production could be the grounds for a most stimulating social experience, all the more so since filmmakers had to relinquish some of their power with respect to their films. It was within this group that the advantages of the video Portapak began to be discussed as a means of minimizing the technical knowledge required for audiovisual production (for video did away with the logistical implications of film printing) and facilitating the reproduction and distribution of the tapes. Meanwhile, at the NFB it was decided that the institutional function and tutelage of filmmakers ought to be reinforced due to the *Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle* program, which was created in the context of this reflection on the role of community-based audiovisual creation. In this regard, Robert Forget embraced the opposite approach, that of developing individual competency, by making audiovisual production techniques as accessible as possible. This was achieved by means of technical innovations (*éditomètre*), by allowing twenty-four-hour access to the production facilities, and by providing a logistical framework for the projects. By means of such an undertaking, an entire social dynamic was to be set in motion based on production relations between the project authors of various backgrounds and the members of Vidéographe, and between the author members of Vidéographe themselves. This dynamic was expected to produce a symbolic impact by means of productions that promoted self-accomplishment within a collective structure based on goodwill.

People believed in this project because they took part in making it happen. Yet this was done in a closed circle, despite the expectations of the Vidéographe board, which, in its 1975 year-end report, laments that its main clientele comprises students from the lower-middle and the middle classes. Ultimately, the project to make video democratic failed, along with the project to forge a community. This marked a new page for the artistic milieu, for the interest in community was no

9 Minutes of a Vidéographe meeting held at Piedmont on 21, 22 and 23 June 1971, 4.

10 Vidéographe counted 2,080 spectators during its first year of operation (July 1971–31 March 1972); 11,339 in its second year (1 April 1972–31 March 1973); and 4,709 in its third year (1 April 1973–31 March 1974). Vidéographe Archives. Internal document. *Fiscal Years 1971–1975*, 1.

11 See the selectoTV concept at Belœil, Gatineau, and Mont-Laurier during the years 1972–1973.

12 Members included Fernand Dansereau, Maurice Bulbulian, Michel Régnier (filmmakers); Hortense Roy (distributor) and Robert Forget (producer).

13 Maurice Bulbulian, *Deux films sur la guerre à la pauvreté*, NFB production archives. Undated (but likely made in 1967).

14 Ibid.

longer to be an essential part of creation. One no longer believed in it because one no longer took part in making it happen. For its part Vidéographe, which became incorporated in 1973 following its separation from the NFB, reoriented itself in order to obtain funding from government organizations: it hoped to be recognized as an educational entity (by attempting an alliance with neighbouring UQAM), but instead found its niche as a video art centre by making its mandate the development of artistic, author-based creations.

At the beginning of the 1970s, at a time when videographic practices had not yet been embraced by experimental art, one strove to invent sites that would facilitate the experience of collaborative forms of creation and modes of socialization.¹⁵ Networking efforts were not solely dedicated to the development of a communication and exchange infrastructure, as one would easily be led to believe today in light of the Internet. In fact, they were also geared towards researching new forms of interaction that went hand in hand with the decisive evolution of forms of sociability that preoccupied the youth of the time.

For the first generation of Vidéographe video-makers, the medium was understood as a milieu: the participation of "people from the communities" in a collective work was perceived as reinventing "community action." A tendency towards collective creation and cooperative modes of operation are embodied in videographic documents that go beyond the simple recording of events and strive to convey the relational experience of their creation and to propose a kind of utopia through the models of interaction they transmit. The virtue of these documents is to have reinforced the faith in the communal effectiveness of collective undertakings.

This particular appetite guided the seeking out of alternative lifestyles characteristic of the 1970s. One must recall that community-related anxieties prevailed during this period. Some suggested that people were in a state of "dis-belonging" with respect to America (it was claimed that we live here like foreigners and that the way we treat the land is a symptom of this state of affairs). Others perceived the imaginary communities that the émigrés of every possible origin carried with them (i.e., the city's rural migrants or the Italians on the Main) as the pathetic resources of displaced populations. Others still were concerned about the disappearance of their own collective imaginary under the pressure of American media and its tendency to standardize cultures of reference, so much so that the notion of the collective rapidly became an outlet for experimentation. The

¹⁵ With respect to the West Coast, see also *Intermedia History* (Glenn Lewis, Western Front Video, 1973).

documentation accumulated by these artists' groups and resource management cooperatives produced the traces of a sociability weakened by the abandonment of traditional codes of social interaction in favour of new ones – linking young people, women, artists – thereby overturning hierarchies, rendering contacts equivocal, and, by transforming the relational function of the camera, seeking accountability from the Third Party (society) that such documentation represents. But this documentation also leaves a bitter aftertaste due to the relative failure of the democratization of artistic and distribution practices. The diversity of Vidéographe's productions was due to the community objectives of the organization. In their failure, they forced the institution to base its legitimacy on the existence of a specific "milieu" of videographic art. A new era had begun.

**PUBLISHING
AS ALTERNATIVE
SPACE**

FELICITY
TAYLER

- 1 The title of this essay is a reference to an article by Martha Wilson reprinted in *The New Artsspace* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1978). Wilson was herself inspired to use this title as a reference to a text by Howardena Pindell, "Alternative Space: Artists' Periodicals," *Print Collector's Newsletter* 7, no. 4 (September–October 1977). This article was the impetus for Wilson's asking four curators/teams to create a series of four exhibitions for Franklin Furnace in New York under the title *The Page as Alternative Space 1909–1980* (September 1979–June 1980).
- 2 Keith Wallace, "A Particular History: Artist-run Centres in Vancouver," in *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991), 43.
- 3 Quoted in Garry Neill Kennedy, "NSCAD and the Sixties," in *Conceptual Art: The NSCAD Connection 1967–1973* (Halifax: Anna Leonowens Gallery, 2001), 21.
- 4 The Canadian art market was underdeveloped compared with art centres like New York or Paris, and public museums acted as conservative "static impenetrable institutions" in contrast to the decentralized national and international networking communities that artists were developing through new technology or communications media. However, there was initially an interest and openness on both sides for movement between the artist-run spaces and the institutions that already existed. Intermedia, for example, had a close relationship to Simon Fraser University, the UBC Fine Arts Gallery, and the Vancouver Art Gallery, and Doug Christmas hosted events at the Douglas Gallery. In Toronto, the Art Gallery of Ontario provided a venue for events for the Toronto artists' community (such as the 1971 Miss General Idea Grand Awards Ceremony; submission entries were simultaneously shown at A Space). A Space grew out of the private initiative of Chris Youngs's Nightingale Arts Council and welcomed experimental works by artists who were also represented at commercial galleries such as Carmen Lamanna or Isaacs. In Montreal, the thirteen artists who founded Véhicule emerged from a series of exhibitions at the Saidye Bronfman Centre (45°30'North–73°36'West, 1971), and within two years of its founding collaborated on an exhibition with the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (*Périphéries*, 1974).

In the late 1960s and early '70s, artists created alternative spaces for production and exhibition and used publishing as an extension of these spaces and their mandates of self-determination.¹ The alternative spaces established by Canadian artists were the physical manifestations, or nodes, in an intangible network that stretched across the country and the world, bridging geographic isolation. They also reflected a desire on the part of artists to communicate their activities outward to a wider audience, on their own terms, through a contemporary aesthetic of information. Production and exhibition spaces were created by artists as environments for interaction and exchange, just as communications media were used to parallel and extend existing art information sources.

In the late 1960s, the idea of space had expanded beyond architecture or geography to encompass the political or social. Developments in information technology and communications theory influenced art practices that relied increasingly on international networks and collaborative relationships. Artists simultaneously undermined the commercial gallery and museum as sites for cultural production and adopted information systems not traditionally associated with art. In the United States, the term "alternative space" originated from the National Endowment for the Arts to describe the artist-initiated activities.² This development of alternative spaces, particularly in New York, is often positioned as a circumvention of the commercial galleries and a museum system complicit in an exploitative art market. It was also in direct opposition to restricted access within prevailing systems, at a time when artists sought to integrate their practices more democratically into public life. In 1969, Lucy Lippard visited Vancouver and Halifax, bringing her experience as a member of the radical Art Workers' Coalition in New York and a growing interest in dematerialized art practices. Her assessment of art systems in Canada reflected that contrary to the situation in the United States, "in Canada, maybe you can start from scratch and don't even have to mess with breaking down the barriers."³

Although influenced by their counterparts in the U.S., artist-run spaces in Canada developed not so much in opposition to an entrenched and ailing system but rather to fill the void in an underdeveloped cultural infrastructure.⁴ These spaces functioned alongside or parallel to existing cultural structures in order to open up more opportunity for artists to create and connect across the linear distance of Canadian geography. They also counteracted a historical reliance on European culture for legitimization and the more recent dominance of American cultural influences. In this sense, the term "parallel" was used for a

time to describe such spaces in Canada until it was rejected shortly after the formation of ANNPAC (Association of National Non-profit Artists Centres) in 1976, when the artist-run centres adopted an oppositional stance in response to their economic marginalization.

During this early period, artists emphasized a dissatisfaction with the existing cultural infrastructure as they described new roles for artists in society, new patterns and methods of communication, and a desire for collaboration between disciplines and across geographic space. Significant to the development of the artist-run spaces was their commitment to the exchange and flow of people and information. At a time when many works were arriving for exhibition in the form of photographs, printed matter, or videotape sent through the postal system, artists were equally committed to setting up information centres and data banks. At A Space in Toronto or at Véhicule in Montreal, for example, these initiatives had the practical mandate to give access to art information otherwise unavailable to a growing community of practitioners and to a general public.⁵ In other cases, such as Image Bank in Vancouver, Michaël Morris explains, their archive acted as a research resource, "an accumulation of cultural data for the purpose of exploring methods of communication."⁶

Publishing as a conduit for information exchange was an integral part of the alternative spaces' fulfillment of their mandates, as can be seen in their requests and reports to the Canada Council, in particular through their use of newsletters. The newsletters often functioned to communicate practical information on a gallery's activities but also adopted attributes of assemblage magazines offering the opportunity for artists to disseminate work created for the printed page without restriction or editorial control. In this way, publishing (like video) was one of the tools that artists used to transmit both artworks that adopted an informational aesthetic⁷ and factual recordings of the activities in the growing network paralleling conventional art systems. Often the two modes of representation were conflated, creating hybrid forms.

THE PAGE AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

Activist and cultural responses to the volatile political climate of the 1960s were expressed through small presses that sprang up in cities across Canada. Since its founding in 1957, the Canada Council for the Arts provided subsidies to small presses that encouraged writers and poets to publish their own books and "little magazines" to

- 5 *A Space News* 4 (August 1971): 2. "A Space is becoming an *Information Centre* for contemporary art. We would like to hear from anyone about their activities. We will put your information out where people can see it (on the walls, tables, library, etc. at A Space). We'll send it to people in other parts of Canada and the world who might be interested in you and your work. If we get something that we especially like we'll write something about it in *News*.... We don't know where all this will lead at this point. We have some ideas about annual massive books on the information we receive. It will all depend on the human factors that information usually depends upon."
- 6 Morris, "The Artist as Curator of the Imagination," 41.
- 7 Eve Meltzer, "The Dream of the Information World," *Oxford Art Journal* 29, no. 1 (2006): 121.

counterbalance foreign-owned mass-market publishing houses.⁸ As a result, ideas and ideologies that were not reflected in mass-circulation books, magazines, and newspapers could be independently produced and freely circulated to both a growing university-educated population and a counterculture audience. The small-press literary movement shared ideology with visual artists, such as the democratization of communications media, self-determination, and self-representation through control of production and distribution systems. The inter-media activity that brought together experimentation in poetry, theatre, music, dance, and visual arts around events such as the Festival of Contemporary Arts in Vancouver (beginning in 1961) had an impact on the fluidity of these exchanges.

Mimeograph, Xerox, and rapid commercial offset services became more affordable (or the equipment was available on the second-hand market), and artists harnessed these technologies to their own advantage. The ability of the technologies to combine type, photographs, and fine-line illustrations on paper of variable quality was tantamount to a print revolution. With the flexible distribution available through the postal system, this new situation was advantageous to writers and artists who did not have access to major publishing houses or were not located in the geographic centres of the art world.⁹ *Region* magazine (1961) published by Greg Curnoe is an early example, as it validated the regional concerns of London, Ontario, in opposition to cultural concentration in metropolitan centres. In Quebec, *Parti pris* (1963) served as an example of self-representation through a politicized cultural magazine, and influenced a cultural revolution that transformed "French Canada" into the nation of Quebec.¹⁰

For visual artists, printed matter such as ephemera, books, and magazines became vehicles for the transmission of art, information, and ideas. Through connections to Fluxus, Canadian artists were involved in a network that used publishing in its literal sense, as to "make public or to proclaim" – through the public space of widely circulated printed matter.¹¹ Alternatively, they were influenced by Conceptualism as artistic production shifted from object to information, from gallery to text. Both of these phenomena officially legitimized publishing as an exhibition space, or as the extension of the exhibition space.¹² The work of Iain and Ingrid Baxter through N.E. Thing Co., Vancouver, demonstrated to artists in Canada how the communications media of organizational culture (telex, newsletters, annual reports, etc.) could serve as a model for artistic production. The Véhicule poet Endre Farkas reflects that "one of the things that happened in the sixties and seventies was that the artists actually

started to *use* the media, as opposed to just listening to it. You now control, as opposed to it controlling you."¹³

FILLING THE VOID

Like their creation of physical spaces, publishing by artists could also be understood as an act of filling a void. The availability of American media (such as *The Village Voice*, *Artforum*, and, later, *Avalanche*) was significant in informing Canadian artists; however, there were very few mass-circulation magazines devoted to coverage of the visual arts in Canada in the 1960s. The two that existed, *Canadian Art* (1949), which became *artscanada* (1967), and *Vie des arts* (1956) were "glossies" that reflected the priorities of an international art market or commercial dealers aiming to inform taste and encourage sales to the general reader.¹⁴ These magazines were rejected by artists in the same breath as they expressed their dissatisfaction with the art institutions, as AA Bronson explains: "knowing the impossibility of an art scene without real museums (the Art Gallery of Ontario was not a real museum for us), without real art magazines (and *artscanada* was not a real art magazine for us)."¹⁵

There was some crossover between worlds as artists contributed content to magazines and newspapers. Victor Coleman wrote reviews for *artscanada*, for example; however, the magazine's rejection of a text with the comment that the artist he had chosen was "not ready for a national audience" was interpreted as "editorial imperialism" from the dominant form of art communication that was slow to recognize independent artist-initiated activities.¹⁶ Another example was *artscanada*'s refusal to approve an advertisement for *FILE* magazine in 1972.¹⁷ Tom Dean expresses similar dissatisfaction as a reviewer for *The Montreal Star*; he felt that written criticism was not meaningful in the same way that art was meaningful and intended to "replace reviews by having artists design a section of the newspaper – in other words, if they wanted to use that page as an art object or if they wanted to write something, we would organize a page."¹⁸ When the newspaper refused, his response was "you can't do anything it seems unless you do it yourself."¹⁹ As this example demonstrates, artists self-organized to create their own cultural spaces for production and dissemination at the same time that they self-organized to create their own specialized publications such as *FILE* (1972), or *Only Paper Today* (1974). Artists formed their own communications network and reflected themselves back through the media – thereby imagining themselves, and a Canadian art scene, into existence.²⁰

⁸ George L. Parker, "Small Presses in Canada 1930s to 1960," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 2000), 2176–77.

⁹ John Tagg, "Movements and Periodicals: The Magazines of Art," *Studio International* 192, no. 983 (1976): 143.

¹⁰ Authors involved with *Parti pris* were André Major, Pierre Maheu, Paul Chamberland, and Gerald Godin.

¹¹ Kate Linker, "The Artists' Book As Alternative Space," *Studio International* 195, no. 990 (1980): 77.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Endre Farkas, quoted in *Impure: Reinventing the Word*, ed. Victoria Stanton and Vincent Tinguely (Montreal: Conundrum Press, 2001), 134.

¹⁴ Karen McKenzie, "The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *The Art and Pictorial Press in Canada* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1979), 30.

¹⁵ AA Bronson, "Humiliation of the Bureaucrat," in *Museums by Artists*, ed. AA Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 29.

¹⁶ Russell Keziere, "Cdn Art Mags: Implications and Consequences of the Proliferation of Art Periodicals in Canada," *Criteria* 3, no. 1 (November 1977): 10.

¹⁷ The advertisement is reproduced in *FILE* 1, no. 2 (1972), inside back cover.

¹⁸ Beverly Carter, "Conversations with Four Montreal Artists," *artscanada* 28, no. 1 (February–March 1971): 19.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Bronson, "Humiliation of the Bureaucrat," 29.

THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE

What follows here is an account of the nodes in the network of the emerging Canadian art scene. The focus is on the links between publishing originating from social movements, small-press literary activity, and a network of artists who connected through the alternative spaces – in particular, publishing activity between 1967 and 1975 around *Intermedia*, *Western Front*, *A Space*, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and *Véhicule Art* (Montréal) inc.²¹ This bibliographic essay traces connections among independent publishing in political movements, the experimental literary small press, and artist-run culture.

Sources for this text were mostly drawn from primary documents and administrative evidence from the galleries and alternative spaces' archival fonds. The research concentrated on publishing where artists controlled the production process, assumed an editorial role or the responsibility for content.

Documents considered include those that use mass printing technology with the goal to produce cheap multiples. In this sense, the fine-printing tradition is ignored.²² Also excluded are video or audio production. Although artists achieved similar goals of self-representation and communication through electronic media, the technological requirements for production and distribution differ significantly. Marshall McLuhan and his theories of the electronic age were a driving force behind artistic practices in any media, but here the focus is on printed matter and its distribution through the postal system as a significant site of artists' experimentation with communications media.

VANCOUVER

In Vancouver in the 1960s, two small presses of note are the poet/painter bill bissett's *blewointmentpress* and Jim Brown and David Robinson's *Talonbooks*. Both presses published experimental work from artists and writers in the Vancouver community and beyond, and both had a relationship to *Intermedia*.²³ *Blewointmentpress* grew out of the activity of *blewointment* magazine, published between 1963 and 1969. Contributors to the magazine were poets, writers, and artists (such as Al Neil, Dennis Vance, and Gary Lee Nova) who were part of the Sound Gallery/Motion Studio's experimental public performances (a precursor to the *Intermedia Society*).²⁴ Later issues of the

magazine were produced on a Gestetner office duplicating machine in bill bissett's studio on the third floor of the *Intermedia* building.²⁵ The issues included experimental work from writers, poets, and artists and contained an eclectic gathering of found material hand-collated and stapled by participants for distribution to the Vancouver counterculture readership.²⁶ When the magazine ceased production, *blewointmentpress* continued to publish books, including works such as *Parking Lots for Greg Curnoe*, by Victor Coleman (co-published with *Intermedia*), in 1970.

In 1965, bill bissett joined Jim Brown, David Robinson, and others to found *Very Stone House*, producing books under the imprint *Talonbooks/Very Stone House* (by 1967 the two had become separate imprints).²⁷ Like *blewointmentpress*, *Talonbooks* originated from a literary magazine, *talon* (1963), but evolved to publish books of experimental poetry and drama.²⁸ Authors published by *Talonbooks* included bpNichol, Roy Kiyooka, bill bissett, and Victor Coleman. *Talonbooks* also published the *International Image Exchange Directory* (1972) for Image Bank, which brought together the names and addresses of all known participants in the concrete poetry movement, the New York Correspondence School, *Fluxus West*, *FILE* magazine, the Poem Company, and the Image Bank mailing list.²⁹

Intermedia's own press was founded by Ed Varney in 1969, when the co-operative had acquired a Roneo electric stencil machine and duplicator with the capacity for four-colour stencil cutting.³⁰ Like other equipment on *Intermedia's* premises (video and film cameras, film projectors, sound recording devices, etc.), the Roneo was available for use to anyone with an interest. Ed Varney applied his previous experience in producing literary magazines to publishing a variety of pamphlets, newsletters, magazines, and books. Simultaneously, Varney co-founded the magazine the *Poem Company* (1970) with John MacDonald and Henry Rappaport, mostly distributed for free through the postal system in order to "choose our audience rather than having it choose us."³¹

The Roneo machine and *Intermedia Press* were part of the Society's practical application of communications theory, as propositions put forth by McLuhan and others were subjected to "suitably controlled tests and experimentations."³² Between 1969 and 1975, a number of publishing projects were produced through *Intermedia* in collaboration with others. Alongside the *Intermedia Newsletter* (1968) and books of concrete poetry, *Intermedia* publications included the *Free Media Bulletin* (1969) by Jeff Wall, Duane Lunden, and Ian Wallace;

21 Unfortunate omissions were the activities in the prairies during this time period. The role that publishing played in the development of W.O.R.K.S. (We Ourselves Roughly Know Something) under Clive Robertson and Paul Woodrow is of interest.

22 Works produced through Atelier Libre or Open Studio, for example, warrant further investigation.

23 The term "intermedia" is attributed to the Fluxus publisher, Dick Higgins, who communicated the concept through an essay in the *Something Else Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (1966): 1–6.

24 Michael De Courcy, "Intermedia 1967," *Intermedia1967* <http://www.michaeldecourcy.com/intermedia/footnotes.htm> (accessed December 30, 2008).

25 Gregg Simpson, "A Short History of the Sound Gallery and Motion Studio," <http://www.greggsimpson.com/soundgallerymotionstudio.htm> (accessed December 30, 2008).

26 Maxine Gadd quoted in De Courcy, "Intermedia 1967," <http://www.michaeldecourcy.com/intermedia/footnotes.htm#blewointment> (accessed December 30, 2008).

27 David McKnight, *New Wave Canada: The Coach House Press and the Small Press Movement in English Canada in the 1960s* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1997), 22.

28 Ibid., 56.

29 *International Image Exchange Directory* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1972).

30 "The Publishing History of Intermedia" / *Intermedia Society*, 1972, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts [hereafter UBCRB], *Intermedia Society fonds*, box 3, folder 12.

31 Ed Varney, "The View from Canada 1968–1972," in *Eternal Network: A Mail Art Anthology*, ed. Chuck Welch (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1995), 41.

32 "Intermedia: A Survey of Intended Project Areas" *Intermedia Society*, 1967, UBCRB, *Intermedia Society fonds*, box 3, folder 11, 1.

Michael Goldberg's *Video Exchange Directory* (1971);³³ *Legal Tender* – *Image Bank Annual Report* (1972); and the *B C Almanac(H) C-B* (1970) produced for the National Film Board by Jack Dale and Michael de Courcy.

The *B C Almanac(H) C-B* and its exhibition *Almanac process* demonstrated Marshall McLuhan's rereading of André Malraux's "museum without walls" as photographic reproduction was juxtaposed against print media.³⁴ The publication consisted of fifteen books designed by individual artists and cheaply printed on newsprint. The books were intended for mass distribution and the exhibition itself was a display of photographs of the books' pages, further emphasizing that, as the reviewer Barry Lord stated, "the reproduction for mass distribution comes first, and the 'photograph as object' is only a record of it."³⁵ It was of note that the contributions of Roy Kiyooka, Michael Morris, N.E. Thing Co., Glenn Lewis, and Gerry Gilbert, known for their work in other art forms, were mediated through photographs.

A collaborative recording of Intermedia's past, present, and future was also proposed in a general meeting in 1971. The *Intermedia Exposure Book* was conceived as a process document to give "open accessibility to expression in print media to artists."³⁶ The publication was dependent on funding from the Canada Council, but Intermedia also proposed sending the manuscript out as its January mailing. This project was never realized.

Also active in proximity to Vancouver was the American artist Dana Atchley, who had relocated to Victoria and founded his Ace Space Company. Atchley used publishing to collapse geographic space between himself and other, mainly American, artists. Two assemblage projects, *Notebook 1* (1970), and *Space Atlas* (1971), were compiled from multiple copies of printed pages that he had requested from a network of artists.³⁷ The pages arrived by mail, and once assembled, the "community notebooks" were redistributed directly to participants.³⁸ After the publication of *Space Atlas*, Atchley was funded by the Canada Council to travel and distribute the remaining copies to contributors. This project is documented in the *Fluxshoe* (1972) catalogue published by David Mayor and Beau Geste Press in England with the collaboration of Ken Friedman and Fluxus West, California.³⁹

When artists came together in 1973 to form the Western Front Lodge following the disbanding of Intermedia, they brought with them connections that reinforced publishing as a necessary activity for their production. A 1974 application for assistance to the Canada Council

Explorations Program describes a publications program based on material accumulated in the Image Bank Archive through a collaboration with Coach House Press, Toronto; *FILE* magazine, Toronto; and Talonbooks, Vancouver.⁴⁰ The presence of Image Bank (Vincent Trasov, Michael Morris) and Glenn Lewis's New York Corres Ponge Dance School living and working at the Western Front, ensured a continued interest in networking among artists, particularly for those using printed matter and the postal system as a means of communication. In addition, following the presence of Robert Filliou and other Fluxus artists at the Western Front in 1973, the lodge had become "a centre on the subliminal for the Eternal Network."⁴¹

The Coach House Press had printed the catalogue for the Image Bank Post Card Show at the UBC Fine Arts Gallery in 1971.⁴² Resulting connections to General Idea in Toronto reinforced this use of printed matter and the postal network and evolved into sophisticated projects such as the Hollywood *Decca Dance* in 1974.

The *Decca Dance* took place at the Elks Hotel in Hollywood, California. Inspired by Robert Filliou's concept of the Eternal Network, it was held in celebration of Art's one-million-and-eleventh birthday. The *Decca Dance* was the first event of its kind to bring together an international group of artists who collaborated "on the subliminal" through the correspondence network.⁴³ The event was hosted by Lowell Darling and Willoughby Sharp, but Image Bank, General Idea, and Western Front spearheaded Canadian participation. Over eight hundred artists and their friends attended the lavish Sphinx d'Or Awards ceremony.

The *Decca Dance* was widely communicated through *Avalanche* and *FILE* prior to and following the event. The February 1974 issue of *FILE* was a combination of an annual Artists' Directory/Image Bank Request List and an eleven-year calendar devoted to the inauguration of the *Decca Dance*. The editorial reminds the network that "your letters conquer time and space!" This affirmation was demonstrated through the job sharing inherent in the production of the issue. The labour-intensive typesetting of the directory and request lists was done in Vancouver, facilitated through Western Front's access to Talonbooks's equipment, but the printing was completed in Toronto by General Idea.

A supplement in the form of a tabloid broadsheet, *Art's Birthday: Hollywood Edition* (1974), documented the *Decca Dance* activities for those who could not attend. On the final page is a list of the diverse

33 The video exchange directory had similar goals to the Image Bank request lists and artists directory. The objective was to "facilitate tape exchange as a means of communication, and to encourage the use of video as a parallel-information medium... we hope many communication links will form around the world, decentralizing media processes away from any elite." Michael Goldberg, *Video Exchange Directory* 2 (November 1972), 1.

34 Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 170–71.

35 Barry Lord, "B C Almanac(H) C-B," *artscanada* 27, no. 152/153 (February–March 1971): 42.

36 "Intermedia General Meeting," / Intermedia Society, October 27, 1971, UBCRB, Intermedia Society fonds, box 3, folder 12.

37 The notebooks included works by Ray Johnson, General Idea, Image Bank, Michael Morris (Marcel Dot), Vincent Trasov (Mr. Peanut), Eric Metcalfe (Dr. Brute), Terry Reid, Gary Lee Nova, and Edwin Varney.

38 Stephen Perkins, "Assembling Magazines and Alternative Artists' Networks," in *At a Distance: Precursors to Art and Activism on the Internet*, ed. Annmarie Chandler and Norie Neumark (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006), 400.

39 *Fluxshoe* (Collumpton, Devon: Beau Geste Press, 1972), 13.

40 Application for Assistance Under the Exploration Program, Canada Council for the Arts / Western Front Society, 1974, UBCRB, Western Front Society fonds, box 17, file 4.

41 "Western Front Society Application to the Canada Council for Assistance Under the Alternate Gallery Program" / Western Front Society, October 1974, UBCRB, Western Front Society fonds, box 17, file 1.

42 Varney, "The View from Canada," 42.

43 Michael Morris, "Arts Birthday and the Hollywood *Decca Dance*," *FILE* 2, no. 4 (December 1973): 34.

video documentation, publications, multiples, and ephemera produced to accompany the event.⁴⁴ The script reporting on the awards ceremony, *Mondo Artie, Episode No. 1681*, was later published in Victor Coleman's *IS* magazine (number 17, fall 1975).⁴⁵

Despite travel across the country and correspondence among artists in different geographic locations, the trans-Canada art scene was not homogeneous. Roy Kiyooka illustrated this in the Halifax-Vancouver exchange of 1972, which brought together "two sensibilities; two life rhythms, two feelings of superiority. Knock them together ... to make some chinks to let in understanding."⁴⁶ In this sense, the goal of information sharing within the network was contact and exchange (among individuals and groups) rather than the development of a unified purpose or aesthetic.

HALIFAX

Because the nature of the activity at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) during the years Garry Neill Kennedy acted as president was artist-initiated. AA Bronson claimed that it was "one of the more important artist-run centres in Canada."⁴⁷ In this capacity, it acted as a node in the network that connected Canada to the U.S., Europe, and Japan. The connections were achieved through the presence of international artists as faculty, as well as through experimentations in communications technology and the use of publishing to convey activities of the college beyond the regional isolation of Halifax. NSCAD Press was established in 1972, but the college had already produced various artists' books and other printed matter as an offshoot of the conceptual art practices manifesting themselves under Garry Neill Kennedy's leadership.⁴⁸

David Askevold's Projects Class used communications networks to enable international artists to work with students. The postal system, telephone, telegram, and telex (a precursor to the fax) were used to convey sets of instructions to students from artists such as Robert Barry, Mel Bochner, Dan Graham, Douglas Hubler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Lucy Lippard, N.E. Thing Co., and Robert Smithson. When executing the works for the Projects Class, the artist was the author, students acted as apprentices, and Askevold facilitated the process.⁴⁹ Instructions provided by the artists to the students were published as a set of twelve cards in an envelope as *The Projects Class* (1969). The N.E. Thing Co.'s involvement with Askevold's class eventually led to the *N.E. Thing Co. - Halifax Trans VSI Connection*

as NSCAD became a node in the NETCO global network of art information transmitted by telex and telecopier. Consequently, *Trans VSI connection NSCAD-NETCO* (1969) was published by NSCAD as evidence of the exchange of information across the two extremes of the country (in this book, transmissions from NETCO are arranged chronologically, paired with the responses from NSCAD).

One of Kennedy's initiatives was to bring in Jack Lemon to set up a professional lithography workshop at the school. Although the technique was hand-pulled lithography as opposed to the commercial mass-production technology that this essay focuses on, the workshop was an important precursor to the establishment of the NSCAD Press and instrumental in attracting to Halifax international artists such as Lawrence Weiner, Dan Graham, Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, and Joseph Beuys.⁵⁰

Under the directorship of Kasper König, the NSCAD Press produced "Source Materials of the Contemporary Arts" (1973).⁵¹ The emphasis was on original writings by artists and their documentation, rather than on texts that acted as secondary analyses (catalogues or monographs). The books were intended to fill the role of a university press, advancing knowledge in the visual arts; as such, many of the books in the series were co-published with the New York University Press.⁵² Before the press ceased publishing in 1976 (to restart again two years later), it had produced books by Claes Oldenburg, Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti, Hans Haacke, Steve Reich, and Michael Snow.

Further connections to national and international art scenes were also made possible through the Mezzanine, a flexible project space at NSCAD run by Charlotte Townsend-Gault (who earlier on was one of the writers providing press coverage for Intermedia in Vancouver). Between 1970 and 1973, the Mezzanine acted as a "facility" to present work by visiting artists, faculty, students, and invited artists whose projects could be delivered through the postal system.⁵³ Within the space (twenty by twenty-eight feet adjacent to the Anna Leonowens Gallery), artists defined the context. As Townsend explains, artists used the Mezzanine for "showing/demonstration/performance of art information/works/projects, etc.," taking into consideration the physical qualities of the space as well as the "kinds of expectations directed towards it (an open and volatile situation within an educational institution)."⁵⁴ In this way, the Mezzanine contributed to an ethos of self-determination: "artists were given a free hand. Free of curatorial intervention, free to establish their own frames of reference. This was to become the *modus operandi* of Canada's

44 The entire "exhibition package" was available for purchase at \$1500 or to art institutions for a fee of \$1000 a month.

45 The Mondo Artie scripts were written by Glenn Lewis (working as E.E. Claire) including the 1974 script for the *Decca Dance*. The 1975 issue of *IS* magazine was designed by AA Bronson and published by Vic d'Or (Victor Coleman) on behalf of the *Eternal Network*.

46 Joan Lowndes, "Halifax-Vancouver Exchange," *artscanada* 28, no. 166/167/168 (Spring 1972): 99. Roy Kiyooka writes about this exchange in his *Transcanada Letters* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1975).

47 *From Sea to Shining Sea*, ed. AA Bronson (Toronto: The Power Plant, 1987), 8.

48 AA Bronson, "Publications: Manifestos of the Artist-Run Centres," in *Tiré à part = Off Printing* (Montreal: Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec, 2005), 14-15.

49 David Askevold, "The Projects Class," in *Conceptual Art: The NSCAD Connection 1967-1973* (Halifax: Anna Leonowens Gallery, 2001), 38.

50 The Canadian artists Michael Snow, Joyce Wieland, and Greg Curnoe also used the Lithography Workshop to create innovative work. The workshop published 110 prints by fifty-five artists, and Lawrence Weiner produced the second book of his career, *Flowed* (1971), before the NSCAD Press took precedence.

51 The NSCAD Press was the result of a suggestion made by Dan Graham and followed a mandate set by Dennis Youngs.

52 Garry Neill Kennedy, "NSCAD and the Sixties," in *Conceptual Art: The NSCAD Connection*, 26.

53 Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "Conceptual Daze at NSCAD - The Mezzanine" in *Conceptual Art: The NSCAD Connection*, 42.

54 Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "The Mezzanine," *artscanada* 28, no. 166/167/168 (Spring 1972): 78.

parallel galleries and artist-run spaces everywhere.⁵⁵ Mailers produced by the Mezzanine acted as an extension or a record of the week-long event communicated via an international mailing list to mitigate the “exotic marginality” of Halifax. Artists who contributed projects to the Mezzanine were N.E. Thing Co., Dana Atchley (Ace Space Company), Poem Company, Image Bank, Bill Vazan, Gunter Nolte, Robert Bowers, Stephen Cruise, Ian Carr-Harris, John McEwen, Dennis Oppenheim, and General Idea – all otherwise active in the cross-Canada network of alternative spaces.⁵⁶

TORONTO

In Toronto, the relationship between artists and the small press is most evident in the proximity of Coach House Press to the publishing initiatives of visual artists. By 1966, Coach House had become a hub of activity that opened up opportunities for artists’ publishing and acted as a “social link” between the West Coast communities and Toronto.⁵⁷ The press was founded in 1965 by Stan Bevington, with Dennis Reid and Wayne Clifford, publishing, in its first decade visual books by Robert Fones, Roy Kiyooka, Greg Curnoe/David McFadden, bpNichol, and bill bissett, among many others. It provided, an environment for non-academic interdisciplinary activity (including lectures by Marshall McLuhan’s University of Toronto class), where artists, writers, and photographers actively collaborated on book productions and other forms of printed matter – postcards and posters printed on the offcuts, which gained immediate access to an audience in the streets. Visual artists mingled with writers such as bpNichol who considered their literature to be a visual art and the book to be “a visual event, a sculptural multiple, a machine in which the reader is the only moving part.”⁵⁸ Through Stan Bevington, Coach House shared the technology and skill in letterpress and offset printing with writers and visual artists. His instruction on typesetting line by line, letter by letter, and experimentation with paper, ink, and binding had a distinct impact on a writer’s appreciation for the visual aspects of publishing literature, and the collaborative nature of working at the press integrated the visual artists’ role in publishing beyond illustration.⁵⁹ In 1966, Victor Coleman became editor of the press, bringing with him his experience editing *Island* magazine (1964). His openness and involvement in a diversity of art practices contributed significantly to the association of visual artists with the press.

This informal activity facilitated collaborations between artists associated with A Space and the Western Front.⁶⁰ During this time, Victor

Coleman and Stan Bevington both lived at the Rochdale College (an experimental free school), and Coach House was the school’s official printer – producing its newsletters, application forms, and degrees, among other ephemera. In 1969, AA Bronson also lived at Rochdale and was volunteering for Coach House, learning the basics of publishing and editing *Snore Comix*, made up of drawings by artists such as Gary Lee Nova, Greg Curnoe, Eric Metcalfe, and Vincent Trasov.⁶¹ The same year that Image Bank emerged in Vancouver, AA Bronson, Felix Partz, Jorge Zontal, and Granada Gazelle founded General Idea in Toronto. Although AA Bronson had arrived in Toronto via Vancouver and the Intermedia scene, Victor Coleman played a role in bringing together these two artists’ collectives at Coach House Press through mutual interests in networking, collaboration, and, as Bronson later stated, a “voluminous outpouring of paper ephemera.”⁶²

The communication between General Idea and Image Bank would eventually contribute to *FILE*’s establishment in 1972 as a “house organ” for the Canadian domestic art scene.⁶³ The first four issues of *FILE*, from 1972 to 1974, acted as an extension of the correspondence network. Image request lists and the artists’ directory previously circulated by Image Bank were printed in each issue, as was a motley collection of images and text sent through the network. The first three issues were distributed for free to whomever they wanted to connect with; as a result, two of the first subscribers were Andy Warhol and Joseph Beuys.⁶⁴ The magazine constructed the myth of a Canadian art scene imagined into existence by its participants: “Every image is a self image. Every image is a mirror.... *FILE* is precisely this: the extension and documentation of available space, the authentication and reinforcement of available myths lying within the context of Canadian art today.”⁶⁵ By 1975, *FILE* had become a “mirror of the mirror” and was more of a self-reflexive project for General Idea, but the early issues remain an important example of the self-determination of an artists’ network through print media.

In 1973, General Idea announced Art Metropole as an extension of *FILE* magazine. The organization, which opened its doors in 1974, was described as a “collection agency” devoted to the documentation and archiving of the trans-Canadian art scene and its international connections to the Eternal Network: “as the media and means of extension available to the scene proliferate, Art Metropole intends to keep abreast of the tide, housing and distributing evidence of activity and imagery: magazines, publications, video, correspondence, snapshots, memories, and the ephemeral flood.”⁶⁶ Like *FILE*, Art Metropole was intended as a repository for the materials that acted as

55 Townsend-Gault, “Conceptual Daze at NSCAD – The Mezzanine,” 43.

56 Townsend-Gault, “The Mezzanine,” 81.

57 Bronson, “Publications: Manifestos of the Artist-Run Centres,” 14.

58 bpNichol, “Primary Days,” *Provincial Essays* 4 (1987): 20.

59 Ibid., 24.

60 Victor Coleman, “Collage or Perish!” *Provincial Essays* 4 (1987): 49.

61 Bronson, “Publications: Manifestos of the Artist-Run Centres,” 14.

62 Ibid.

63 “Re: General Idea Application number 311-178 to the Local Initiatives Program, Toronto” / General Idea, c.1972, National Gallery of Canada Archives, Art Metropole fonds, series 5-Art Metropole: Grants, box 2 of 4.

64 Olivier Zahm and Dash Snow, “Interview with AA Bronson,” *Purple Fashion Magazine*, no. 11 (Spring–Summer 2009), <http://aabronson.com/art/purple/interview.html> (accessed March 30, 2009).

65 Editorial, *FILE* 1, no. 1 (April 1972): 3.

66 Editorial, *FILE* 2, no. 4 (December 1973): 10.

the connective tissue in an art scene coalescing around a self-reflexive use of media. Beginning in 1974, Art Metropole produced catalogues of the artists' publications and videos available for sale.⁶⁷

A Space, originated in 1970 as the Nightingale Arts Council, and the first exhibition, *Contacts '70*, organized by Robert Bowers and Chris Youngs, included the works of General Idea, Ian Carr-Harris, Stephen Cruise, John McEwen, and Dennis Oppenheim. Following a fire and a move, the organization reopened in 1971 as A Space⁶⁸ with an exhibition of faculty from NSCAD.⁶⁹ A catalogue accompanied the exhibition, and publications such as *Trans VSI Connection NSCAD-NETCO* were available for sale.⁷⁰ A Space declared itself as "concerned with the flow of people and information relevant to visual art."⁷¹ It was with this purpose that the space was used to connect artists from across the country and beyond.

The intention was equally reflected in the way they used various communication strategies, such as their Xeroxed newsletter, as information channels. *NEWS* consisted of a series of 8½ x 11 sheets of paper packaged in a standard-size envelope, and artists were encouraged to use the newsletter to disseminate work appropriate to the printed page, or to use it as a platform for reviews of exhibitions. The newsletter functioned primarily as an extension of works shown in the gallery space (reproducing notes or scores of videos or performances). Among the artists who took advantage of the open call for participation were Vito Acconci, Bill Vazan, General Idea, Ian Carr-Harris, Gerald Byerly, John McEwen, Ken Friedman, Ed Varney, and Dana Atchley.

Although *NEWS* was produced on a Xerox machine, it precipitated the purchase of an offset press in 1972 in order to accomplish other publishing initiatives; for example, a cultural directory and a proposed "participatory publication" titled *Evidence*. A request was to be made to two hundred artists for "a 24 x 24 inch page of information, written and visual, on their work, attitudes, directions, opinions, etc.," to be prepared as an exhibition and then as a publication. Like the previously mentioned Intermedia book, this exhibition/publication never did materialize.⁷² The press was ultimately used to publish a cultural resource directory titled *Vehicule* (1972). The setup of and training on this press for A Space artists was done with the help of Coach House Press.⁷³

Victor Coleman, who had been involved at A Space through poetry readings, ultimately became director of the organization in 1974.

taking over an editorial role for *Only Paper Today*, the newspaper that had grown out of *NEWS*, *X*, and *Proof Only*. With *Only Paper Today* (*OPT*), Coleman continued to apply the open and experimental approach he used at Coach House Press with the goal of serving the arts community as a conduit for the circulation of information. As editor of *OPT*, Coleman reflected on the tension between artists' independent publishing and the mainstream press: "when *OPT* was started they (the editorial board of *Proof Only*, *OPT*'s progenitor) wanted it to be something like *artscanada* with a monthly newsletter with the same kind of writing. How could we do that? We didn't have the kind of money to pay those writers. But they also really wanted the reviews [i.e., of local Toronto shows].... I'm going after writers and artists and saying here's two pages in *OPT*, do something with it. That is not making taste. *OPT* doesn't have a policy *per se*, in terms of what is 'good' art and what is 'bad' art. Therefore it is not a cohesive unit. It's like lighting a bunch of firecrackers and throwing them in the middle of the street. Two or three of them are bound to be duds...."⁷⁴

To establish contacts across Canada and beyond, A Space actively sought out information on like organizations. In 1971, an unsolicited letter of introduction was sent to Intermedia seeking documents of their activities as well as proposing a videotape exchange and the possibility of the "traffic of people from Vancouver to Toronto in regards to exhibition at A Space."⁷⁵ The same year, Suzanne Rivard Le Moynes at the Canada Council recommended contacting like-minded persons in Montreal, including Tom Dean and Bill Vazan, who would later go on to found Véhicule.⁷⁶ A Space also reached out through magazines such as *Radical Software*,⁷⁷ and Suzy Lake remembers that the Véhicule artists discovered A Space through *Avalanche* magazine and correspondence with Willoughby Sharp.⁷⁸

MONTREAL

It is in Montreal that we see a closer relationship between publishing linked to political movements and publishing by artists. The 1960s in Quebec and in particular in Montreal were characterized by underground artistic activity that drew direct lineage to the Automatistes painters and their protest against stifling conservative values through the *Refus Global*. In what was considered the absence of a truly Québécois art tradition, questions of nationalism were directly linked to art and cultural expression;⁷⁹ the idea of a pan-Canadian art that could reflect a cohesive national identity, as encouraged by the Canada Council, was seen in 1971 by Marcel Saint-Pierre as an illusion,

67 The anthology *Video by Artists* (1976) established the format for subsequent publications, and Tom Sherman's *3 Death Stories* (1977) was the first of a series of publications by individual artists.

68 A Space directors are identified as Marien Lewis, Robert Bowers, Stephen Cruise, John McEwen, and Bill Graham in the July 1971 issue of *News*, although they tended to correspond anonymously to emphasize the collective identity of A Space.

69 The exhibition included video, film, and performances by David Askevold, Dubé, Jarden, Kelly, McNamara, Murray, Robertson, Douglas Waterman, Young, and Tim Zuck.

70 A Space *Information Package* no. 1 (May 1971): 4.

71 Ibid., 1.

72 "Canada Council: Request for Assistance to Arts Organizations" / Nightingale Arts Council operating as A Space, February 3, 1972, E.P. Taylor Library and archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto [hereafter EPTLAAGO], A Space fonds. Gift of A Space Gallery, 1996, box 80.

73 "Local Initiative Program Application for Extension of Project" / Nightingale Arts Council operating as A Space, September 27, 1972, EPTLAAGO, A Space fonds. Gift of A Space Gallery, 1996, box 80.

74 Victor Coleman quoted in Keziere, "Cdn Art Mags," 12.

75 "Letter to Intermedia" / A Space, April 28, 1971, 1 p., UBCRB, Intermedia Society fonds, box 3, folder 3.

76 "Letter to A Space" / Suzanne Rivard Le Moynes, May 4th, 1971, EPTLAAGO, A Space fonds. Gift of A Space Gallery, 1996, box 80.

77 *Radical Software* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 32.

78 In an interview Suzy Lake reflected on *Avalanche* and correspondence with Willoughby Sharp as the source that made the Véhicule artists aware of General Idea and A Space in Toronto. She is likely referring to the no. 7 issue (Winter-Spring 1973), which features an interview with General Idea. This seems late, as Bill Vazan had been in contact with A Space at least since 1971. See "Researching the Self: Robert Enright Interviews Suzy Lake" *BorderCrossings* 13, no. 1 (January 1994): 14.

79 Marcel Saint-Pierre, "A Quebec Art Scenic Tour" and his "contradictions itinéraires" reprinted from *Opus International in Québec Underground, Tome 2* (Montréal: Les Éditions Médiart, 1973), 450.

"un pan-canadianisme à l'image des USA."⁸⁰ Although it was motivated by a different national narrative, this period of cultural revolution was nonetheless also marked by the coalescence of artists into groups, an integration of the arts, an interest in the social value of art and artists, and the use of parallel networks of information.

The group Fusion des Arts (1964), involving Yves Robillard, Henry Saxe, François Soucy, François Rousseau, and Richard Lacroix, initiated events and happenings that integrated artistic disciplines and would later have an ongoing influence. Within the period of the Quiet Revolution, the secularization of the education system and subsequent reforms had a particular resonance for writers, artists, and students, and resulted in the occupation of the École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal (1968) and the creation of the Université libre d'arts quotidiens (ULAQ) (1968), a decentralized society responsible for large-scale protests in the form of happenings.⁸¹ This group, as well as other political activity leading up to the October Crisis (1970), was informed by the contemporary strategies of the Situationist International and the Youth International Party through the circulation of underground cultural magazines such as *Parti pris*, *Rézo*, *Allez Chier*, *Mainmise*, and *Point Zero*.⁸² Yves Robillard, then a full-time teacher at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), secured some funds for ULAQ and was one of the main instigators of the group's activities. He was also the dedicated chronicler of underground artistic activity in Quebec during this time.

In 1971, the Groupe de Recherche en administration de l'art was formed at UQAM by Rose-Marie Arbour. Normand Thériault later on became its director. This group published the magazine *Médiart* (1972), with an open editorial policy, "MEDIART est conçu comme une journal d'information libre, ouvert à tous les artistes, anartistes, ou personnes intéressés qui veulent bien y collaborer."⁸³ While not technically publishing by artists, *Médiart* shared affinities with artist-initiated projects in its open editorial policies. The first issue included writing and a chronology of Anti-Art by Yves Robillard. By 1973, éditions *Médiart* had published three volumes of texts describing the *Québec Underground: 1962-1972*. These books were essentially a compilation of documents collected by Robillard about the marginal or parallel artistic activities in the 1960s.⁸⁴ The issues of *Médiart* also published during this time featured texts by Chantal Pontbriand, Claude Gosselin, and René Blouin, among others. Their articles covered international and national art scenes for a francophone audience; of note is coverage of activities of *FILE* from Toronto, at NSCAD in Halifax, and of Image Bank and Intermedia in Vancouver.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Ibid., 448.

⁸¹ Ibid., 459.

⁸² Ibid., 461.

⁸³ *Médiart* 16 (April-May 1973): A-4.

⁸⁴ "L'Underground se débat," *Médiart* 16 (April-May 1973): 3.

⁸⁵ *FILE* is covered in *Médiart* 6 (vol. 1, no. 6) (May 1972), and activities in Halifax and Vancouver are described in *Médiart* 5 (vol. 1, no. 5) (April 1972).

The connection between *Médiart* and the newly forming parallel gallery Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. was made through Normand Thériault. Although he is not one of the founding members of Véhicule,⁸⁶ he was mentioned in minutes of meetings at the early stage in 1971, because a liaison through Thériault would be integral to Véhicule's function as an information centre.⁸⁷ This relationship led to the gallery's use of *Médiart* as a form of dissemination for information on the group's activities, beginning with a four-page section in number 9 (September 1972). The content and layout of the pages was under the editorial control of the artists at Véhicule.

Véhicule's use of *Médiart* as a means for communication was part of a larger strategy that they had described in their application to the Canada Council (including a new monthly bulletin, supporting information for exhibitions, and a series of books). Their intention was to use publishing as a means to communicate the perspectives of artists exhibiting at Véhicule to a wide public. They also hoped to use the space to debate developments in contemporary art ideas and practices. In this way, although Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. was not directly linked to political movements, their interest in parallel networks of information can be traced back to the politicized cultural movements described in *Québec Underground*.

Integral to the vision of Véhicule from the early stage was the acquisition of an offset press and plate-making equipment. The establishment of a printing co-op remained part of their requests for funding from the Canada Council and the federal Local Initiatives Program (LIP) as part of an ambitious plan to put the tools of publishing into the hands of artists for the purpose of sharing information. The interest of Véhicule's members in engaging with this technology is clearly outlined in the original grant application at the Canada Council for their first year of activity and is evidence of the shift from printing as a craft to printing as a mass-communications medium:

One of the problems that concerns many of our members is the inaccessibility to offset printing equipment for most artists. In recent years offset has increasingly replaced traditional art printing techniques such as stone lithography, etching and silk screen. The schools and a number of workshops have facilities for these traditional techniques, but as yet there is no offset equipment available to artists in Montreal. Commercial prices are prohibitive, quality control is in the hands of the printer, and there is little or no opportunity to test the limits of offset in an experimental way. As previously mentioned, we have been

⁸⁶ The thirteen founding members were Gary Coward, Tom Dean, Jean-Marie Delavalle, François Déry, Andy Deukewych, Suzy Lake, Dennis Lukas, Kelly Morgan, Gunter Nolte, Milly Ristvedt, Henry Saxe, Serge Tousignant, and Bill Vazan.

⁸⁷ First meeting / Gary Coward, Jean-Marie Delavalle, Andy Deukewych, Dennis Lukas, Suzy Lake, Kelly Morgan, Gunter Nolte, Milly Ristvedt, Henry Saxe, Normand Thériault, Serge Tousignant, December 11, 1971, Concordia University Archives, Montréal [hereafter CUA], Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds, (P027.1c/1).

offered the instructional assistance of a professional printer, and one of our members, Tom Dean, who is completely familiar with the operation of offset, has agreed to coordinate the use of equipment, therefore creating the climate of a creative workshop. We already know a large number of artists inside and outside the group excited at the idea of having access to such a workshop. The equipment will be available only to people genuinely engaged in an artistic practice, and won't be used for commercial purposes.⁸⁸

Tom Dean was in charge of finding the printing equipment for Véhicule, bringing with him his own interest and experience in creating art for the printed page.⁸⁹ By the time the Véhicule print co-op was up and running, Dean had already published conceptual book works and the assemblage magazines *Easy Cheap* and *Cheap* (1970). The two hundred artists whose work was drawn from for each issue included Dennis Vance, Bill Vazan, Paul Woodrow, Tony Urquhart, and Henry Saxe. Later, Dean would produce three issues of *Beaux-Arts* (1972), also an assemblage magazine, including the lubricated *Special Pornography Issue* (1973) printed at Véhicule.

In early 1973, Simon Dardick became the press manager of the print co-op at the back of the Véhicule gallery because of his previous experience publishing magazines. He describes himself, Guy Lavoie, and others involved with the printing co-op as "a motley group of artists, writers, painters and university drop-outs who learned trades.... We all learned how to become printers so we could do the production."⁹⁰ Poets such as Endre Farkas, Artie Gold, Tom Konyves, Claudia Lapp, John McAuley, Stephen Morrissey, and Ken Norris were attracted to Véhicule because, like creators in other disciplines using the space, they were provided with a place where they could share their work and eventually publish. The cross-fertilization of poetry with other media occurred through a regular reading series, as well as through the operation of the press during the presentation of exhibitions and performances. At the same time, the press was printing material for political groups, community groups, and promotional material for other galleries (such as Powerhouse).⁹¹

An undated newsletter, *Véhicule*, was produced "containing essays, international correspondence, competitions and general activities and lectures both of a didactic or performing or event nature."⁹² This newsletter included material from Bill Vazan and Gunter Nolte⁹³ on projects existing both as conceptual work in physical space and as information on the printed page, as well as an account of the Quebec Underground debate. Allan Bealy, as editor of *Da Vinci*

magazine (1973), was influential in the crossover between visual art and poetry.⁹⁴ Bill Vazan's book work *Contacts* (1973) is a representation of the connections that Véhicule artists fostered with the national and international network of conceptual and correspondence artists. The book featured a global network of artists who contributed their interpretation of the sign "X" in response to a request sent through the international correspondence network. As Bill Vazan stated, "the act of making their 'X's in fulfilling the *Contacts* requests led to a certain formalization that unified the project group into one sensibility, identifying in it unities and a metaconsciousness greater than itself."⁹⁵

The diverse material sent to Vazan for *Contacts* included works by regular contributors to the international correspondence network, such as a letter and map from David Mayor of Beau Geste Press. Mayor provides comments regarding recently received issues of *Beaux-Arts* and *Médiart* as well as instructions for Vazan to contact General Idea for a photo of the Beau Geste Press community in the printing room at Cullompton. *Contacts* was launched at the Musée d'art contemporain at the same time as the artists associated with Véhicule were presented in the *Périphéries* exhibition (1974). The catalogue for *Périphéries*, including texts by Suzy Lake and Chantal Pontbriand, was printed by Véhicule as part of the collaboration with the museum.

Like A Space, Western Front, and the Mezzanine, Véhicule used its space for an ambitious series of exhibitions and events that combined disciplines and brought innovative artists or their work from the national and international network to Montreal. Among the visiting artists were Roy Kiyooka, Gary Lee Nova, Marien Lewis, General Idea, Willoughby Sharp, Ken Friedman, Robert Filliou, Les Levine, and Ben Vautier.

THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE CALCIFIES

By the late 1960s, the art world had become intrinsically tied to the communication of information through mass media and image reproduction. Lawrence Alloway described the output of the art world as "the distribution of art, both literally and in mediated form as text and reproduction."⁹⁶ Artists who were dissatisfied with existing systems of distribution created their own alternative networks, both literally in the form of alternative exhibition spaces and in mediated form through publishing. In Canada, this flow of people and information allowed artists to overcome an underdeveloped cultural

88 Proposal to the Canada Council ("Véhicule" project - English) / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1972, CUA, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. fonds, (P027.3a/1.)

89 [First meeting].

90 Quoted in *Impure: Reinventing the Word*, 129.

91 Ibid., 130.

92 Suzy Lake in *Peripheries* (Montréal: Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.; Musée d'art contemporain, 1974), 4.

93 Vazan's project makes reference to the upcoming publication of *Contacts*. Gunter Nolte's contribution is the documentation of his thousand-gallon liquid clay systems sculpture at Véhicule, shown in 1973; the same piece was also shown at A Space in Toronto in 1972, where it was equally communicated through printed matter.

94 Simon Dardick quoted in *Impure: Reinventing the Word*, 131.

95 Bill Vazan, *Contacts* (Montréal: Véhicule, 1973), 3.

96 Lawrence Alloway, "Network: The Art World Described as a System," *Artforum* 11, no. 1 (1972): 29.

infrastructure (what McLuhan declared a “damp cultural igloo for Canadian devotees of TIME & LIFE”)⁹⁷ to bridge regional isolation and to communicate their work internationally. In this sense, it is important to consider each individual act of publishing within the network as an activity inextricable from the whole.

One question raised by this constellation of relationships within the network is why artists at the time expanded their skill-sets to adopt the role of administrator, publisher, writer, or critic. A partial explanation is the use of commercial mass-printing techniques to gain control of media representation, but it also reflects their participation in a “technological imaginary” of the information society.⁹⁸ In an era when owning a typewriter or a mimeograph machine would mean serious penalties in totalitarian states of Eastern Europe or South and Central America, this gesture of self-determination was also inherently political.

This technological imaginary, as well as the aesthetic exploration of information transmission, was altered in the mid-’70s. The artist-run centres were multiplying exponentially, and the institutions or commercial galleries that had formerly collaborated with them became less flexible. The creation of ANNPAC formalized a network of artist-run centres and positioned them in opposition to museums and commercial galleries. Likewise, their publishing activities shifted focus to legitimize the activities of their self-sustaining network as ANNPAC assumed the role of fostering connections. The content and production of *Parallelogramme* (1976), the professional journal of this “third network,” is entirely artist initiated; however, the information conveyed evolved from straightforward listings of upcoming shows in member centres to articles of an administrative or lobbying nature in later issues. Compared with artists’ experimentation with publishing prior to 1975, *Parallelogramme* acts as a practical tool and is less an exploration of the idea of information transmission.

This text was written to bring together a collection of material that has been inconsistently incorporated into libraries and archives rather than curated into exhibitions or museum collections as artworks. Most of the material is publicly accessible but invisible to younger generations with a revived interest in networked culture and social media. This collection of primary documents, and the constellation of relationships inherent in their production, raises questions requiring further consideration of a nuanced history of alternative spaces in Canada and the parallel networks of communication created by artists. Can information fill a void?

97 Marshall McLuhan, *COUNTERBLAST* (Toronto: Self-published, 1954).

98 Meltzer, “The Dream of the Information World,” 120.

DOCUMENTARY
PROTOCOLS (1967-1975)

PROTOCOLS
DOCUMENTAIRES (1967-1975)

PROTOCOLS
DOCUMENTAIRES (1967-1975)

DOCUMENTARY
PROTOCOLS (1967-1975)

ESSAIS

VINCENT BONIN
ANNE BÉNICHOU
MARION FROGER

**PROTOCOLES
DOCUMENTAIRES
(1967-1975)**

VINCENT
BONIN

Au milieu des années 1960, les artistes canadiens souffrent d'un isolement culturel causé par l'indifférence des musées à leur égard et l'inaccessibilité du marché de l'art international. Ils pallient cette exclusion en créant des espaces alternatifs où ils peuvent présenter un travail de nature expérimentale et offrir des services aux membres de leurs communautés. Parallèlement à l'accomplissement des tâches qu'exige la consolidation d'une existence institutionnelle, ces groupes façonnent un réseau de communication postale avec leurs pairs et utilisent la vidéo portative en vue de contourner les monopoles de l'audiovisuel. Le Conseil des Arts du Canada s'adapte exceptionnellement au décloisonnement de ces pratiques par la mise en place de programmes *ad hoc*.

Hormis des opuscules, bulletins et autres véhicules publicitaires émanant des artistes eux-mêmes¹, lors des années 1970, la fortune critique des activités de ces « espaces alternatifs » est limitée aux recensions d'expositions. Dans les années 1980 et 1990, quelques ouvrages soulignent la longévité d'une organisation. Cette occasion devient un prétexte pour mettre à profit les archives et cueillir les témoignages des acteurs de la première heure². Au cours de la même période, des mémoires de maîtrise sont rédigés sous la forme d'études de cas³.

Les artistes écrivent également l'histoire des institutions qu'ils ont créées. En 1987, AA Bronson, l'un des membres fondateurs du collectif General Idea, dirige *From Sea to Shining Sea* accompagnant une exposition au Power Plant (Toronto) dont il est commissaire⁴. Ce livre comprend une chronologie détaillée cumulant les faits saillants de la genèse de ces structures. Il s'agit d'une publication importante – la seule proposant un bilan pancanadien de l'émergence du paradigme autogestionnaire dans le champ de l'art depuis sa parution.

Protocoles documentaires ne comble pas la lacune d'un ouvrage exhaustif sur l'évolution de ce paradigme des années 1960 jusqu'à aujourd'hui. En revanche, le projet investit une parenthèse historique faisant converger le passage de l'économie vers le secteur tertiaire et la redéfinition du statut des artistes. Cette parenthèse s'ouvre avec l'incorporation de l'Intermedia Society (1967) – première coopérative multidisciplinaire subventionnée par le Conseil des Arts – et se ferme au moment des pourparlers entre 17 organisations en 1975, qui débouche sur la création de l'Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centers (ANNPAC) l'année suivante. Ce regroupement facilite la répartition équitable des subventions et procure aux artistes des outils de lobbying auprès des agences gouvernementales. Cependant, il arrime le réseau décentralisé, imaginé lors de la première portion des années 1970, à la machine bureaucratique qu'ils tentaient

précisément de contourner. La deuxième partie de cette décennie coïncide avec le réinvestissement de la peinture sur le mode expressionniste et le retour du cube blanc comme dispositif de monstration. Enfin, la mutabilité des sujets dans les mouvements contre-culturels fait place aux débats sur la représentation de la différence sexuelle, les questions de classe et d'ethnicité. *Protocoles documentaires* met à mal le lieu commun selon lequel l'essor de ce paradigme autogestionnaire représente une période laboratoire d'où dérive l'infrastructure actuelle des centres d'artistes. Elle prend en compte une rupture fondamentale au milieu des années 1970 entre différents partis pris esthétiques et programmes politiques.

Certaines organisations nées lors de cette période charnière se sont dissoutes (General Idea, Image Bank, Intermedia, N.E. Thing Co., Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.), tandis que d'autres tiennent le cap malgré les changements de mandats et la démission des membres (A Space, Art Metropole, Video Inn, Western Front Society). Corollairement, sous la rubrique d'un seul nom de personne morale se succèdent plusieurs individus d'appartenances idéologiques variées. Or la trajectoire historique de ces structures reste perceptible au sein de leurs fonds d'archives. Ceux-ci inscrivent les retombées d'utopies partiellement réalisées parmi les traces matérielles du travail des artistes.

L'échantillon de documents qui précède le présent texte témoigne d'une façon transversale de cette temporalité. Il est divisé en cahiers consacrés aux organismes autogérés ou collectifs d'artistes incorporés entre 1967 et 1975, dont les fonds sont désormais accessibles dans des musées publics et des universités (A Space, General Idea, Image Bank, Intermedia Society, N.E. Thing Co., Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., Vidéographe, Western Front Society).

Son découpage chronologique repose sur le principe qu'un récit se trame à travers la succession des demandes de subvention, lettres échangées, formulaires remplis et disséminés, etc. Par ailleurs, il est nécessaire de prendre en compte l'historicité des fonds d'archives eux-mêmes dans le façonnage de cette narration.

S'inspirant de la génétique, des anthropologues et des historiens associés au champ d'étude des cultures matérielles emploient la métaphore heuristique d'une « biographie » des objets afin de rendre perceptible le déplacement d'artefacts d'un contexte vers l'autre, ainsi que leur changement de valeur. Appliquée à l'analyse des archives, cette approche détermine dans quelle mesure les fonds ne constituent pas uniquement des réceptacles d'information, mais disposent de leur

1 Pour une analyse de la fonction que joue le protocole de la publication au sein des structures autogérées lors de cette période, voir : Felicity Tayler, « Publishing as Alternative Space » dans cet ouvrage.

2 *Whispered Art History: Twenty Years at the Western Front*, sous la dir. de Keith Wallace, Vancouver, Arsenal Pulp Press, 1993; *The 25th Anniversary Project*, Toronto, A Space, 1996.

3 Diana Nemiroff, *A History of Artists-Run Spaces in Canada with Particular Reference to Vehicule, A Space and the Western Front*, mémoire de maîtrise, Montréal, Université Concordia, 1985; Gail Tuttle, *The Intermedia Society (1967-1972) and Early Vancouver Performance Art*, mémoire de maîtrise, Victoria, University of Victoria, 1994.

4 *From Sea to Shining Sea: Artist-initiated Activity in Canada, 1939-1987*, sous la dir. d'AA Bronson avec la collaboration de René Blouin, de Peggy Gale et de Glenn Lewis, Toronto, Power Plant, 1987.

propre trajectoire⁵. Celle-ci est faite de tissages complexes entre plusieurs pratiques et acteurs (les auteurs des textes, les ayants droit, etc.).

Pendant la première portion des années 1980, les fonds de structures autogérées se trouvent dans un état de dormance et sont mis en péril par des conditions inadéquates d'entreposage. Lors de la décennie suivante, plusieurs de ces groupes d'artistes confient leur corpus aux musées publics et à d'autres institutions conservant le patrimoine. Sans cette domiciliation, ces documents ne seraient pas accessibles. Certains fonds ont été sauvegardés de justesse d'une dispersion accidentelle⁶, tandis que d'autres furent acquis à la suite de négociations avec les artistes ou leurs exécuteurs testamentaires.

Protocoles documentaires recoupe plusieurs modes d'énonciation d'une même série d'énoncés. L'intitulé de ce projet se rapporte d'abord à l'utilisation du document par les artistes pour représenter leur marge de manœuvre dans la société des années 1960 et 1970. Il fait ensuite référence aux actes de langage légitimant l'existence administrative des structures autogérées ou des collectifs. Enfin, il désigne les gestes d'un ensemble d'acteurs désormais dépositaires d'archives de ces organismes dans l'objectif d'en pérenniser la matérialité.

Le continuum entre les trois volets du projet est infléchi par ce nœud de contingences qu'il faut partiellement restituer ici pour rendre compte du point d'arrimage institutionnel de ces traces et des contraintes qu'engage la tentative de les disséminer.

EXPOSITIONS, PUBLICATION

Une remarque liminaire s'impose afin de distinguer ce projet d'un nombre considérable d'expositions et de publications gravitant autour du concept d'« archive » depuis le milieu des années 1990⁷.

Les commissaires y investissent le détournement par les artistes d'une médiation des retombées documentaires de leur pratique. L'imprécision du terme « archive », élidant le pluriel, fait écho aux lacunes méthodologiques de ces propositions curatoriales elles-mêmes, devenues accumulations hétéroclites d'objets et de discours. Des thèmes afférents – collection, mémoire, échantillonnage, etc., – se greffent à l'entreprise de rassembler des œuvres souvent sans commune mesure. Ces thèmes trouvent leurs assises théoriques dans les ouvrages traduits vers l'anglais d'auteurs associés au mouvement de la « French Theory » ; particulièrement *Mal d'archive* de Jacques Derrida et *L'archéologie du savoir* de Michel Foucault.

8 À ce sujet, voir : *The Need to Document*, sous la dir. de Vit Havranek, Sabine Schaschl-Cooper et Bettina Steinbrügge, Zurich, JRP/Ringier, 2005 ; *The Greenroom : Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art*, sous la dir. de Maria Lind et Hito Steyerl, Berlin, Sternberg Press, 2008.

9 Sous cette rubrique figure, entre autres, l'exposition *Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Art Movement*, NYC (1996) organisée par l'artiste et commissaire Julie Ault au Drawing Center (New York), qui rend compte de l'essor des structures autogérées à New York entre 1965 et 1985. Voir : *Alternative Art, New York, 1965-1985*, sous la dir. de Julie Ault, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

10 Tom Holert fait ainsi retour sur la surenchère d'images documentaires présentées lors de la *documenta 11*. Les commissaires de cette exposition ont cumulé les dispositifs pour encourager la mobilité du spectateur devant certaines propositions normalement visionnées en salle de cinéma. Corollairement, selon Holert, cette suggestion d'une appréhension distraite des images accélère leur inscription dans une logique du spectacle. Voir : Tom Holert, « The Apparition of the Documentary », dans *Documentary Now! Contemporary Strategies in Photography, Film and the Visual Arts*, Rotterdam, Nai Publishers, 2005.

11 Bill Nichols postule que le genre du documentaire repose sur ce discours de la sobriété où les contenus sont formatés en fonction des horizons d'attente de certains publics. Voir : Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts of Documentary*, Bloomington et Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991. Sur le formatage des archives, voir également Martin Beck, « On Formatting History (stored and exhibited) », dans *Critical Condition: Ausgewählte Texte Im Dialog*, sous la dir. de Julie Ault, Martin Beck, Kokerei Zollverein, Essen, Kokerei Zollverein, 2003, p. 248-266.

12 Derrida choisit ici comme exemple d'une telle domiciliation des archives la transformation de la dernière demeure des Freud en musée. Voir : Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive : une impression freudienne*, Paris, Galilée, 1995, p. 13.

Dans la foulée de ce phénomène, depuis la *documenta 11* (2002, Cassel), une série d'expositions proposent également d'élargir la rubrique du documentaire. Autrefois cantonné à une rhétorique précise, le genre s'hybride alors en fréquentant plusieurs disciplines et médias⁸.

Au même moment, d'autres commissaires tentent de concevoir un appareil interprétatif autour de pratiques émergeant dans les années 1960 et 1970, dont les modes d'occurrences sont avant tout événementiels. Leurs projets embrassent des enjeux périphériques à la production d'œuvres, réévaluant la problématique d'une exposition, d'un festival ou d'une publication de l'époque⁹. Comme la mise en récit historique doit souvent faire l'économie des objets d'art, les archives audiovisuelles ou textuelles permettent d'évoquer un contexte absent et les gestes de divers acteurs.

Ces approches hybrides de l'exposition sont contestées par plusieurs commentateurs qui considèrent toujours l'œuvre comme une proposition autonome présentée dans des conditions idéales de visibilité¹⁰. L'exégèse doit, quant à elle, figurer au sein du catalogue. Ce modernisme résiduel substitue le découpage institutionnel des horizons d'attente du spectateur au concept greenbergien de la spécificité des médiums. La salle de cinéma, la salle de lecture, les galeries ou le gabarit des publications produisent des modes de perception mutuellement exclusifs. Relever leurs zones de contact met nécessairement en péril l'intelligibilité des contenus que chacun de ces dispositifs est normalement appelé à transmettre.

Or le décroissement ne représente pas en soi une stratégie novatrice, car sous le couvert d'une approche interdisciplinaire certains commissaires recyclent banalement un didactisme muséologique et ramènent ainsi le discours de la sobriété du documentaire dans l'espace d'exposition¹¹.

Contrairement aux projets tablant sur la présentation d'images photographiques ou vidéo, *Protocoles documentaires* rassemble surtout des retombées textuelles de pratiques artistiques et d'activités administratives. Il aurait donc été possible de court-circuiter l'étape de la monstration des documents en les faisant transiter directement vers la publication. Cependant, la galerie universitaire s'est avérée l'un des points de chute les moins contraignants afin d'assurer leur médiation.

Comme le souligne Jacques Derrida, la reprise d'un fonds privé par un musée scelle sa dépendance au nom propre d'une personne physique ou morale¹². En retour, ce signifiant absorbe les « archives

des autres ». Le rapprochement de pièces issues de plusieurs corpus solidaires déjoue cette domiciliation. Elle crée alors une structure médiane regroupant des traces de provenances variées, mais liées à des processus contigus¹³. Lors des deux premiers volets du projet, la galerie est devenue un tiers espace mettant à jour de telles configurations discursives. Les documents cohabitaient métaphoriquement, pour une durée limitée, entre l'ancienne adresse de leurs destinataires et celles des lieux qui en sont désormais dépositaires.

Cependant, la conception d'une exposition se bute d'emblée aux limites de cette utopie d'un point d'accès neutre à l'information. Henri Lefèbvre postule ainsi que la fonction sociale de l'espace est toujours déterminée par l'écart entre les paramètres idéologiques qui le définissent et les usages contingents qu'il encourage¹⁴. Le cube blanc ne se confine pas à la surface vierge des murs. L'enceinte architecturale doit également reproduire les conditions d'humidité et de température des réserves où l'on conserve les documents et les œuvres¹⁵. L'obtention d'une licence de prêt d'objets de collections publiques exige de la galerie qu'elle possède le statut d'établissement désigné « A » en vertu de la commission canadienne d'examen des exportations de biens culturels¹⁶.

En revanche, notre expérience nous a indiqué que les procédures de gestion des demandes varient sensiblement d'une institution à l'autre.

Parmi ces prêteurs, le Musée des beaux-arts est celui qui a imposé l'ensemble de consignes les plus strictes. Chacun des documents nous est parvenu dans des contenants sur mesure, munis de cartons protecteurs afin d'éviter qu'ils ne touchent directement les vitrines. Certaines pièces plus fragiles ont été soumises à des comités de restaurateurs en vue d'évaluer si elles pouvaient sortir des réserves. Malgré cette lourdeur administrative, les demandes de prêts ont été satisfaites. Or le département des livres rares et des collections spéciales de l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique a refusé de faire circuler des documents issus des fonds Intermedia Society et Western Front Society sous prétexte que l'institution ne disposait pas de politique d'emprunt¹⁷. Le contenu des vitrines consacrées aux deux organismes de Vancouver a donc été uniquement constitué de pièces des fonds d'archives personnels d'anciens membres de la coopérative (Victor Doray, Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov). Les visiteurs ont pu cependant consulter des photocopies de documents des fonds institutionnels conservés par l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique.

L'organisation des deux expositions aurait été impossible sans la générosité de Vincent Trasov et de Michael Morris, dont le corpus

est confié à la galerie Morris and Helen Belkin (Vancouver) pour une durée indéterminée. Soucieux de le diffuser adéquatement, ils ont élargi sensiblement notre marge de manœuvre quant au nombre de documents empruntés et à leurs modalités de présentation.

Espace liminal entre l'institution et le public, la vitrine superpose une volonté de transparence communicationnelle au fétichisme de la relique. Elle suture ainsi l'illusion de l'exhaustivité historique tout en conférant un surcroît de valeur d'usage aux artefacts. Par contraste avec les œuvres migrant uniquement des réserves vers les salles d'exposition, l'expérience tactile des archives devient possible au sein de la salle de consultation. La lecture s'y trouve néanmoins balisée par un ensemble de règles qui en fait un rituel lourd de sens, ancrant le texte dans la matérialité de son support.

Il n'aurait pas été concevable d'organiser ces expositions sans mettre en tension la médiation muséologique des documents et leur accessibilité sous forme de matériaux de recherche.

Un concept – abandonné en cours de route – consistait à créer des aires de monstration et de consultation distinctes. Or, comme la galerie institue habituellement ce type de ségrégation spatiale par le truchement d'une salle de documentation *ad hoc* où elle réunit du matériel d'appoint (catalogue, dossiers de presse, etc.) afférent aux expositions, les volets I et II de *Protocoles documentaires* ont fusionné la logique de ces deux dispositifs.

Les pièces en vitrine étaient accompagnées d'opuscules comprenant un commentaire de nature didactique, une liste des documents, ainsi que des repères chronologiques. Un échantillon de pièces photocopiées, en quantité supérieure et dépourvu d'appareil interprétatif, reléguait les archives à leur contenu d'information¹⁸.

Le premier volet présentait les photocopies dans des cartables, à même des socles disposés au centre de l'aire où circulaient les visiteurs, tandis que les vitrines se trouvaient contre les murs. Pour le deuxième volet, la stratégie fut inversée : elles étaient placées sur des tablettes fixées aux murs, en périphérie d'une enfilade de vitrines occupant une grande salle rectangulaire. Chaque tablette correspondait à une année de la chronologie dans l'opuscule et rassemblait des pièces de l'ensemble des fonds d'archives.

Ces photocopies ont été obtenues et exposées en vertu d'une clause de la loi sur le droit d'auteur donnant une licence au chercheur de posséder de tels exemplaires pour usage privé¹⁹. La clause ne comprenait pas

13 Le fonds General Idea renferme ainsi de la correspondance envoyée par Image Bank. Les archives Morris/Trasov comprennent quant à elles des missives reçues du collectif de Toronto.

14 Henri Lefèbvre, *La production de l'espace*, Paris, Anthropos, 1974.

15 Cette injonction exclut d'office les centres autogérés comme cadre de monstration des artefacts de leur propre patrimoine.

16 Voir le lien suivant sur le site Web de Patrimoine Canada, consulté le 25 juillet 2009 : [http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/bcm-mcp/desgntn/index-fra.cfm#a1].

17 Par ailleurs, le dossier d'acquisition du fonds contenait des documents rapportant qu'un prêt avait été octroyé à Art Metropole (Toronto) en 1995 pour une exposition intitulée *The Intermedia Society* organisée par AA Bronson cette même année.

18 Cette stratégie rendait également visibles les matériaux accumulés par le commissaire lors de ses recherches, mais refoulés hors du discours de l'exposition.

19 Règlement sur les cas d'exception à l'égard des établissements d'enseignement, des bibliothèques, des musées et des services d'archives (CP. 1999-1351), 28 juillet 1999. *Gazette du Canada*, deuxième partie, vol. 133, n° 17 (18 août 1999).

d'interdiction de présentation publique. Une requête et le paiement de frais modiques ont permis de les diffuser temporairement.

Cependant, faire migrer ces documents vers l'imprimé convoque des protocoles sans commune mesure avec le geste – par ailleurs, complexe – de les déplacer physiquement d'une institution à l'autre.

En règle générale, le prêt d'artefacts reste gratuit dans le périmètre des établissements désignés sous la rubrique «A». Il n'en est pas de même pour effectuer leur numérisation. La galerie a donc dépensé une part importante du budget consacré à ce projet en frais de reproduction. Comme nous l'observons au sujet des politiques d'emprunt de documents, notre expérience a révélé que ces frais varient substantiellement et sont souvent attribués d'une façon arbitraire²⁰. Généralement, ils produisent des revenus symboliques en fin d'année, aux dépens du travail des chercheurs qui justifie pourtant l'octroi de fonds publics pour préserver ce patrimoine et le rendre accessible.

Selon Terry Cook, les archives conservent les traces de la «gouvernementalité», et non uniquement du «gouvernement qui gouverne». Elles peuvent ainsi s'inscrire dans les activités quotidiennes de tous les citoyens sans être la chasse gardée du parti en place²¹. John Frow postule quant à lui que l'aporie de l'information comme don et marchandise surdétermine ses modalités de circulation :

Afin de fonctionner convenablement et équitablement, tout marché dépend d'une «information parfaite» – une information qui est gratuite, complète, instantanée et universellement accessible. En contrepartie [...], la structure marchande de la société contemporaine repose sur une définition de l'information entendue elle-même comme marchandise – onéreuse, partielle, et dont l'accessibilité est délibérément restreinte. [...]²²

Les archives transitent à travers une telle infrastructure économique dans laquelle les fonctions de divers médiateurs sont circonscrites selon l'intervention qu'ils doivent exécuter sur les mêmes matériaux. Loin du mythe toujours véhiculé lui conférant le rôle de gardien de la mémoire et de passeur, l'archiviste agit comme «courroie de transmission» au sein d'une chaîne de production où l'accès au patrimoine collectif devient une prestation de services.

Les chercheurs s'inscrivent également dans ce circuit, car ils transforment les archives en sources et leur accordent ainsi une plus-value d'intelligibilité.

20 Pray Bober du College Art Association fait état de l'effet néfaste d'une montée en flèche récente de ces frais sur la qualité de la recherche en histoire de l'art. Voir : Pray Bober, « Statement Regarding a National Policy on Granting of Reproduction Rights in Art-Historical Publishing », consulté le 25 juillet 2009, à [http://www.collegeart.org/guidelines/repro-rights.html].

21 Terry Cook, « Archival Science and Postmodernism », *Archival Science*, vol. 1, n° 1 (2001), p. 3-24.

22 John Frow, « Information as Gift and Commodity », *New Left Review*, 1/129 (septembre-octobre 1996), p. 102 (notre traduction). Frow rapporte ici les propos de Herbert I. Shiller et Anita R. Shiller, « Libraries, Public Access to Information and Commerce », dans *The Political Economy of Information*, sous la dir. de Vincent Mosco et Janet Wasco, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, p. 159-160.

23 Sur le phénomène d'appropriation des archives par les historiens, voir : Joseph Morsel, « Les sources sont-elles le pain de l'historien? », *Hypothèses*, n° 1 (2003), p. 271-186.

24 Brien Brothman, « The limits of Limits: Derridean Deconstruction and the Archival Institution », *Archivaria*, n° 36 (automne 1993), p. 205-220. Notre traduction.

25 Chaque auteur disposait de la photocopie d'une portion pertinente de l'échantillon. Par ailleurs, certains d'entre eux y ont également greffé des pièces accumulées lors de recherches antérieures.

26 La question de la traduction se pose également d'une façon pragmatique ici, car les contraintes budgétaires ont empêché de fournir des versions bilingues de tous les textes dans la présente publication.

27 Voir Eve Meltzer, « The Dream of the Information World », *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 29, n° 1 (2006), p. 115-138.

28 La commissaire Catherine Moseley postule que la forme matérialisée des propositions conceptuelles se distingue de l'objet d'art traditionnel non pas en vertu de sa dimension éphémère, mais parce qu'elle dépend d'une infrastructure documentaire. Voir : *Conception. Conceptual Documents 1968 to 1972*, sous la dir. de Catherine Moseley, Norwich, Norwich Gallery, Norwich School of Art and Design, 2001.

Lorsqu'ils consultent un fonds pour la première fois, ceux-ci nourrissent l'illusion d'accéder à un territoire intellectuel dont la carte n'a pas été dressée. Leur travail de dépouillement évacue alors la matérialité complexe des documents pour n'en retenir que la partie écrite, soluble dans les filons narratifs d'une exégèse²³. Selon Brien Brothman, les références aux sources en bas des pages ou à la fin des textes sous forme de notes consolident cette ségrégation discursive :

[...] Les notes sont le résultat d'une opération d'exclusion in-catégorielle, décourageant et réprimant – toujours avec un certain regret et un succès limité – une interruption, une diversion dans une autre histoire peut-être plus, peut-être moins importante²⁴.

Le découpage éditorial de la présente publication tente de déjouer ces hiérarchies discursives en donnant la même visibilité à un échantillon de documents issus des fonds d'archives des structures autogérées ou des collectifs d'artistes et aux études de cas basées sur la lecture rapprochée de ces matériaux²⁵.

Le terme «adresse» désigne le siège social d'une institution, mais également l'action d'identifier les destinataires dans l'acte de communication (s'adresser à quelqu'un). Le commentaire suivant tente d'infléchir l'écriture de l'histoire par la reconnaissance des effets de cette translation/traduction des documents d'une adresse à l'autre²⁶.

INFORMATION

Entre la fin des années 1960 et le début des années 1970, les représentants de la mouvance conceptuelle et de Fluxus investissent le concept d'information d'une socialité intrinsèque. Bien que ces artistes n'énoncent pas toujours les mêmes partis pris critiques, ce concept lie leurs pratiques en vertu d'un projet de démocratisation qu'elles partagent. Comme l'avance Eve Meltzer, l'imaginaire technologique de cette période suggère aux artistes de «reprogrammer» les médias selon un coefficient émancipatoire, voire politique²⁷. Corollairement, ils tentent de rendre coextensives l'exposition et la publication en court-circuitant le réseau de tiers (critiques, conservateurs, galeristes) responsables d'assurer la mise en discours de l'expérience esthétique²⁸.

Certains de ces médiateurs avalisent *a posteriori* ce décloisonnement. En 1969, la critique américaine Lucy Lippard prononce une conférence au Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (Halifax) intitulée «Toward a Dematerialized or Non Object Art» où elle postule que

la dissémination de propositions conceptuelles sous forme de documentation contournera la logique marchande²⁹.

Plus tard, dans la postface de *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object*, Lippard reconnaît cependant l'échec programmé de cette utopie qu'elle défendait en ignorant les capacités exceptionnelles d'absorption du marché³⁰. Dès le milieu des années 1960, les artistes concilient une acception de l'information comme ressource gratuite avec son existence en tant que marchandise assujettie à la propriété intellectuelle.

Par ailleurs, ce phénomène ne s'observe qu'au sein d'un groupe restreint d'acteurs jouissant d'une certaine visibilité dans le monde de l'art des années 1960 et 1970. Plusieurs représentants de l'idiome conceptuel comptent sur d'autres sources de revenus (principalement l'enseignement)³¹ et ils se tiennent ainsi à l'écart de la dimension spéculative de l'économie capitaliste. C'est le cas des artistes canadiens dont la survie dépend en grande partie de subsides gouvernementaux et de prestations de services entre pairs donnant lieu à des relations contractuelles sur lesquelles nous reviendrons. Faisons cependant un aparté pour circonscrire les protocoles qui permettent aux artistes américains et européens d'insérer leurs propositions dans la logique marchande tout en se dégageant d'une définition restrictive du concept d'auteur. Certaines analyses récentes de cette période embrassent les questions surgissant lorsqu'un acte notarié surdétermine la performativité intermittente des œuvres.

Didier Semin commente la stratégie d'Yves Klein de faire breveter ses procédés esthétiques, car leur valeur ne repose plus sur l'indice « autographe » (la main de l'artiste)³². L'essai de Semin dépasse ce cas de figure en abordant d'autres exemples où des opérations exécutées par un tiers se substituent à cet indice, mais c'est Maria Eichhorn qui produit l'ouvrage le plus exhaustif sur le sujet. Dans *The Artist's Contract*, elle rend compte des retombées d'un projet de recherche amorcé en 1997 autour du contrat rédigé par Seth Siegelaub et l'avocat Robert Pojansky (*The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, 1971). Le document stipule que les artistes devraient profiter d'au moins 15 % de la valeur ajoutée d'une œuvre lors de sa revente et contient des clauses permettant d'en protéger l'intégrité matérielle³³.

Eichhorn réalise une série d'entretiens avec divers acteurs clés du monde de l'art américain et européen des années 1960 et 1970 afin de déterminer comment chacun d'entre eux utilisait ce document. Ces discussions mettent notamment en relief le rapport ambivalent, et parfois antagoniste, que nourrissent les artistes à l'égard du marché et des institutions³⁴.

En 1989, dans un article qu'il écrit pour le catalogue de l'exposition *L'art conceptuel : une perspective*, Benjamin Buchloh fait l'adéquation entre la faillite politique du conceptualisme et l'utilisation par les artistes de procédures notariées pour infléchir la valeur – marchande et intellectuelle – de leurs œuvres³⁵. La prolifération de certificats et autres actes de langage tautologiques fournit les bases d'une « esthétique d'administration » cooptant, selon lui, l'épistémè dominante du capitalisme tardif. Buchloh mentionne *Document (Statement of Aesthetic Withdrawal)* (1963) de Robert Morris comme exemple de ce mimétisme. Morris utilise alors les services d'un notaire afin d'oblitérer l'existence d'une œuvre antérieure (*Litanies*, 1963) en possession de l'architecte Phillip Johnson, dont il juge qu'elle n'a plus de coefficient esthétique. D'après Buchloh, cette proposition, ainsi que celles d'Yves Klein (surtout ses brevets) se cantonnent dans l'effet de validation immédiat et inviolable procuré par le cadre juridique. Comme contre-exemple, il évoque les projets *in situ* de Dan Graham, de Hans Haacke, de Daniel Buren et de Marcel Broodthaers, où l'ironie « retourne la violence de cette relation mimétique contre l'appareil idéologique lui-même » et pose les assises théoriques d'une « critique de l'institution ». Buchloh confond cependant le verbe « administrer », qui peut recouper plusieurs contextes sans se rapporter explicitement aux modes de reproduction du capitalisme, avec le postulat de Theodor Adorno d'une sphère culturelle « totalement administrée »³⁶.

Par principe, la performance d'un service ne survit pas au contexte qui la suscite. Contournant cet état de fait, certains théoriciens privilégient les représentations métaphoriques du travail dans le périmètre de visibilité de l'art en occultant les pièces justificatives que produisent les artistes lorsqu'ils occupent la fonction d'administrateur.

Comparant la rupture paradigmatique des pratiques minimalistes et conceptuelles au passage de l'ère industrielle vers le secteur tertiaire, Helen Molesworth confère, par exemple, une dimension heuristique à la rubrique du « process art » afin de problématiser des définitions convenues du travail intellectuel et manuel³⁷.

John Roberts tente quant à lui de mesurer l'écart qui sépare la division des tâches du système capitaliste d'une entreprise de collaboration entre artistes. Unis par l'intellect collectif de la machine de production, les ouvriers coopèrent, mais cessent d'exister individuellement. En revanche, les membres d'un groupe d'artistes ne dissolvent pas leur identité et façonnent des représentations complexes du travail³⁸.

29 Lucy Lippard, « Toward a Dematerialized or Non Object Art », transcription de la conférence prononcée le 29 novembre 1969 au Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax. Collection Art Metropole, Bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada.

30 Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* ..., Berkeley, Los Angeles, Londres, University of California Press, 1997 [1973], p. 263.

31 Sur l'enseignement des arts aux États-Unis dans les années 1960 et 1970, voir : Judith Adler, *Artists in Offices: An Ethnography of an Academic Art Scene*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Books, 1979.

32 Didier Semin, *Le peintre et son modèle déposé*, Genève, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, 2001.

33 Maria Eichhorn, *The Artist's Contract: Interviews with Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Paula Cooper, Hans Haacke, Jenny Holzer, Adrian Piper, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Ryman, Seth Siegelaub, John Weber, Lawrence Weiner, Jackie Windsor*, Cologne, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2009.

34 En revanche, Daniel Buren décrit les effets coercitifs de son « avertissement » qui établit des obligations entre le collectionneur et l'artiste plutôt que la mesure incitative de respecter un engagement. Comme conséquence de la transgression de ce contrat, l'œuvre n'est plus attribuée à Buren. « Daniel Buren », *ibid.*, p. 86-117.

35 Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, « De l'esthétique d'administration à la critique institutionnelle (aspects de l'art conceptuel) » dans *L'art conceptuel : une perspective*, Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1989, p. 25-39 (p. 41-53 pour la version anglaise). Il publie une version remaniée l'année suivante sous le titre : « Conceptual Art: 1962-1965: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions », *October*, n° 55 (hiver 1990), p. 105-143.

36 Voir : Theodor Adorno, *Théorie esthétique*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1989. Bien qu'il ne cite pas l'article de Buchloh, Clive Robertson fait état de l'attention accordée par les historiens américains et britanniques de l'art conceptuel à ce cul-de-sac d'une esthétique de l'administration en occultant la stratégie intermédiaire – surtout adoptée au Canada – consistant à créer de nouvelles institutions. Voir : Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administration of Art and Culture*, Toronto, YYZ Books, 2006, p. 2.

37 Helen Molesworth, « Work Ethic » dans *Work Ethic*, sous la dir. d'Helen Molesworth, Baltimore, The Baltimore Museum of Art; University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.

38 John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade*, Londres et New York, Verso, 2007, p. 125.

Les analyses de Molesworth et Roberts négligent cependant de préciser dans quelle mesure ces représentations sont ensuite absorbées par le marché sous forme de produits dérivés. Celles-ci convoquent le registre de l'« index métaphysique » défini par Diedrich Diederichsen comme la valeur ajoutée du labeur vivant des artistes³⁹.

Les fonds d'archives de structures autogérées témoignent d'une contiguïté entre les protocoles administratifs qu'exigent la constitution d'une institution et la dimension dialogique du processus collaboratif. La lecture rapprochée de leur contenu permet d'investir l'interstice où se négocient les parts visibles et invisibles de cet index métaphysique. Or ces documents ne représentent pas un matériau plus neutre que les œuvres – ils sont tout aussi exposés à la logique du fétichisme. La justesse de leur interprétation repose donc sur une méthode qui contourne le discours spéculatif producteur de reliques, tout en dépassant la notion restrictive de source.

Certains sociologues tentent de circonscrire la subjectivité résiduelle dans les transactions entre les citoyens et les institutions. Parallèlement aux enquêtes sur le terrain, ils consultent des fonds d'entreprises pour y étudier les « prises d'écritures ordinaires » découlant des injonctions du cadre professionnel⁴⁰. Plutôt que de restreindre ces modes scripturaux à des réponses prévisibles, ils débusquent la réflexivité qui s'en dégage⁴¹.

Inspirés par ces grilles d'analyse, nous relèverons d'abord le croisement des pratiques artistiques avec le découpage des tâches que nécessite la mise en place du paradigme autogestionnaire dans le champ de l'art canadien des années 1960 et 1970. Il sera ensuite question du parallélisme entre les stratégies qu'adoptent les artistes pour créer des plateformes d'échange d'information et les programmes de décentralisation culturelle instaurés par le gouvernement de Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Enfin, le compte rendu de l'échec des utopies contre-culturelles lors de la deuxième portion des années 1970 sera suivi de remarques sur la « domiciliation » des fonds d'archives des collectifs d'artistes au sein du complexe muséologique.

INCORPORATIONS

Laissée pour compte dans les réévaluations récentes du conceptualisme⁴², la compagnie fictive N.E. Thing Co. créée en 1966 par Iain et Ingrid Baxter représente un moyen terme entre l'« esthétique d'administration » et la « critique des institutions » qu'oppose Buchloh⁴³.

En 1969, année d'incorporation de N.E. Thing Co., le commissaire et galeriste Seth Siegelaub assimile ses onze départements à un découpage intellectuel des opérations s'enchaînant normalement de façon fluide dans le travail d'un artiste. Plusieurs d'entre eux miment des fonctions de médiateurs du champ de l'art. Les départements ACT et ART se substituent au processus d'évaluation de la critique en émettant des certificats qui confèrent une valeur esthétique à un objet, à un événement, à un geste (*aesthetically considered thing*) ou, au contraire, les rejettent hors de cette sphère consacrée (*aesthetically rejected thing*). Le département d'imprimerie produit les catalogues d'exposition, ainsi que des opuscules promotionnels. Enfin, le département de photographie donne forme et pérennité aux interventions de nature éphémère du collectif.

Par un acte de délégation dont la portée est sous-évaluée, N.E. Thing Co. fait également appel au concepteur graphique Allan Fleming afin qu'il dessine le logotype de la compagnie. Pratique courante, voire banale, la stratégie de confier à un tiers la conception de son image de marque prend une nouvelle dimension lorsque le client est simultanément une petite entreprise familiale de Vancouver Nord et un couple d'artistes dont la réputation dépasse les frontières nationales. Une notice accompagne alors plusieurs documents mis en circulation par N.E. Thing Co., où Fleming en commente le mode d'utilisation :

Ce « symbole logotype » ne pouvait être dessiné que pour la N.E. Thing CO. D'une certaine façon, c'est un objet trouvé, manufacturé, un formulaire parmi des milliers d'autres formulaires, qui vous demande de participer comme il vous convient à l'avenir de la Compagnie. Vous pouvez le remplir. Vous pouvez dire à la Compagnie quoi voir, quoi faire ou quoi avoir. Comme la compagnie N.E. Thing Co. ne dispose que de peu de façon [sic] de vous présenter son symbole, la compagnie compte sur l'environnement pour reproduire le symbole. Chaque fois que vous verrez des lignes pointillées sur un formulaire, quel qu'il soit, vous penserez à la N.E. Thing Co⁴⁵.

Le degré zéro du formulaire de N.E. Thing Co. crée un interstice dans lequel une surface d'écriture devient inscription et inversement⁴⁶. Corollairement, ce cadre générique surdétermine le contenu des messages entrant et sortant du périmètre institutionnel de la compagnie.

En 1970, N.E. Thing Co. conçoit également un système graphique auquel elle souhaite assujettir l'ensemble de ses projets. Les « feuillets d'information » comportent une grille évoquant un plan vierge

39 Diedrich Diederichsen, *On (Surplus) Value in Art*, Reflexions 1, Berlin, Sternberg Press, 2008, p. 42-43.

40 Voir : *Les écritures ordinaires*, sous la dir. de Daniel Fabre, Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, P.O.L., 1993; Jean-François Laë, *Les nuits de la main courante, Écritures au travail*, Paris, Stock, 2008 et *Sociologie et société*, vol. XL, n° 2 (automne 2008). Titre du numéro : « L'archive personnelle, la grande oubliée ».

41 Bien qu'éloignés de cette méthode, les travaux de Delphine Gardey mettent à jour l'histoire sociale des technologies de l'information en analysant les fonctions et les usages d'outils bureautiques avant l'arrivée de l'ordinateur. Voir : Delphine Gardey, *Écrire, calculer, classer. Comment une révolution de papier a transformé les sociétés contemporaines (1800-1940)?*, Paris, La découverte, collection « Textes à l'appui », Anthropologie des sciences et des techniques, 2008.

42 Pour des raisons complexes qui dépassent le champ investi par le présent ouvrage, la fortune critique de l'art conceptuel au Canada reste assez lacunaire.

43 D'autres artistes de la même période produisent également des institutions fictives ou délocalisées. Joseph Kosuth et Christine Kozlov créent ainsi le Museum of Normal Art en 1967, galerie sans lieu fixe sous l'enseigne de laquelle ils organisent des expositions d'œuvres de leurs pairs. L'artiste canado-américain Les Levine fonde le Museum of Mott Art en 1970 (du nom de la rue où il vivait alors à New York). Pour sa correspondance avec les « clients », il produit des feuillets munis d'un en-tête institutionnel reprenant la police officielle du Museum of Modern Art de New York. Il publie également un prospectus l'année suivante, décrivant les services offerts par le musée et leurs coûts unitaires. Un texte accompagne sa mise à jour en 1974 dans lequel l'artiste explique la raison d'être de ces services comme expédients pour les professionnels de la communauté artistique après la fin de l'art. Voir : Les Levine, *Museum of Mott Art inc. Catalogue of Services*, 1971 et *Catalogue of After Art Services*, 1974.

44 Seth Siegelaub fait cette remarque lors de la conférence organisée par Iain Baxter dans le cadre de son exposition « Environnement » au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada (alors Galerie nationale) en 1969. Voir : *N.E. Thing Co. conference (transcription)*, 9 juin, 1969. Dossier de l'exposition « La compagnie N.E. Thing Co., Ottawa, Ont., 4 juin-6 juillet 1969 », Bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada.

45 *President's Message = Message du président*/ Iain Baxter (N.E. Thing Co.). Dossier de l'exposition « La compagnie N.E. Thing Co. Ottawa, Ont., 4 juin-6 juillet 1969 ».

46 Le logotype sera fréquemment télécopié sans que sa migration d'un support vers un autre brouille sa lisibilité.

d'architecte où les Baxter apposent des épreuves photographiques rendant compte de propositions artistiques et interventions (réalisées ou non).

Le mot « INFORMATION » apparaît dans la partie supérieure gauche, comme s'il mettait en exergue la valeur ajoutée qu'on lui accorde au cours des années 1960 et 1970. Du côté droit, des cases sont destinées à recevoir la date, l'intitulé du projet ainsi que son numéro de série. Sa notice descriptive figure au bas du feuillet, avec, de part et d'autre, le logo de la compagnie et son sceau. Ce dispositif d'uniformisation amplifie la singularité des événements formant le parcours de N.E. Thing Co. tout en relevant d'une façon souvent ambivalente le phénomène de mutation des documents vers l'œuvre.

En 1970, Iain Baxter prend part aux activités commerciales de l'*International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition* (Seattle) où se rencontrent annuellement les grands joueurs de l'informatisation (IBM, 3M, etc.) pour présenter de nouveaux produits. Parallèlement à son kiosque, N.E. Thing Co. façonne du papier de correspondance en utilisant les maquettes publicitaires de l'exposition et produit également une chemise dans laquelle les participants peuvent insérer leurs documents. Celle-ci s'accompagne d'un texte détournant la rhétorique des compagnies voisines afin d'infléchir leurs priorités et systèmes de valeur :

N.E. Thing Consult with 1% of you ... the enlightened few who are ready to do something about ... new honesty in business... If you can't make it, don't fake it ... the dirt to support culture ... which is history's true balance sheet after all ... seminars in culture, understanding contemporary art...⁴⁷

Cette même année, N.E. Thing Co. participe à l'exposition INFORMATION organisée par Kynaston McShine au MoMa, qui offre un bilan des pratiques rangées sous la rubrique de l'art conceptuel⁴⁸. Les formulaires d'inscription remplis par Iain Baxter pour prendre part aux deux événements révèlent l'écart existant entre des modes d'interpellation de groupes dont les allégeances idéologiques sont diamétralement opposées dans la société occidentale du début des années 1970.

Lors de la décennie précédente, ces groupes tentent pourtant d'éliminer partiellement ce hiatus. La structure de parrainage *Experiments in Art and Technology* est constituée à New York en 1966 par les ingénieurs Billy Klüver et Fred Waldhauer des Bell Telephone Laboratories, ainsi que les artistes Robert Rauschenberg et Robert

Whitman afin de favoriser des collaborations interdisciplinaires⁴⁹. L'organisation rassemble plus de 300 membres (ingénieurs et artistes). En 1968, Dennis Young crée une section torontoise d'E.A.T. sous la responsabilité administrative du département d'activités éducatives du Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, où il occupe alors le poste de conservateur. Michael Goldberg est quant à lui responsable de la section montréalaise. La section new-yorkaise d'E.A.T. conçoit divers outils de collecte, d'analyse et de dissémination d'information (formulaires, cartes perforées, répertoires) dans l'objectif de jumeler les compétences techniques et les intérêts de ses membres.

Contrairement aux artistes et ingénieurs d'E.A.T. dont les coordonnées se croisent par le truchement de ces gabarits, mais qui restent confinés à leur champ disciplinaire, le nom et l'adresse de N.E. Thing Co. apparaissent simultanément dans le catalogue de l'exposition INFORMATION et l'opuscule de l'*International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition*⁵⁰. Autour de 1969, les Baxter s'inscrivent aussi au registre des compagnies de Vancouver exploitant un télex, moyen de communication dont l'efficacité publicitaire est alors proportionnelle à la quantité restreinte d'interlocuteurs formant ce réseau commercial⁵¹.

Richard Cavell relève l'influence des écrits de Marshall McLuhan chez les artistes embrassant le concept d'environnement afin de contourner les présupposés idéologiques du cube blanc moderniste⁵². Au cours des années 1960, ce concept devient un moyen terme entre le lieu de présentation des œuvres (le musée) et leur médiatisation/dissémination. Il désigne principalement les effets immersifs d'installations et performances brouillant les repères spatio-temporels grâce à la création d'une enceinte architecturale chargée de stimulus sensoriels. Comme le happening intégrant plusieurs strates événementielles (créant selon McLuhan une « *Gestalt totale* »), l'environnement fait converger des phénomènes inconciliables et permet de réunir des individus à la même enseigne sous le couvert d'une expérience qu'ils partagent.

En 1968, la Vancouver Art Gallery cède exceptionnellement des aires d'exposition aux membres de l'Intermedia Society pour qu'ils y diffusent les résultats d'expérimentations audiovisuelles⁵³. L'année suivante, à l'invitation de Pierre Théberge, conservateur de l'art contemporain du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, N.E. Thing Co. produit un dispositif hybride intitulé « Environment » qui met en relief l'ambivalence d'insérer une hétérotopie dans le complexe organisationnel de cette institution. Les Baxter ouvrent ainsi une « succursale » de la compagnie au rez-de-chaussée du Lorne Building, rue Elgin. L'immeuble retrouve

47 N. E. Thing Consults with 1% of You / N. E. Thing Co., 1970. E.P. Taylor bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, Toronto, fonds Iain Baxter, don de Iain Baxter, boîte 12, dossier 20.

48 En guise de documentation de son travail au sein du catalogue, Baxter télécopie un autoportrait textuel se « signalant » dans un style proche du rapport de police. Voir : *Information*, sous la dir. de Kynaston McShine, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1970.

49 *Statement of Purpose/Experiments in Art and Technology*, 1967. E.P. Taylor bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, Toronto, fonds Experiments in Art and Technology, acquis en 1976.

50 *1970 International Data Processing Conference and Business Exposition, Seattle Center*, Seattle, Data Processing Management Association, 1970, fonds Iain Baxter, boîte 12, dossier 20. Programme de l'événement.

51 Dans un entretien qu'elle accorde à Grant Arnold en 2009, Ingrid Baxter raconte que le couple envoyait fréquemment des messages pendant la nuit aux compagnies inscrites afin qu'elles aient ensuite à « gérer » cette information interpestive le matin suivant. Voir : « Ingrid Baxter with Grant Arnold » dans *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*, Vancouver, The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, The grunt gallery, 2009, consulté le 10 août à [http://vancouver-artinthesixties.com/interviews/ingrid-baxter].

52 Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002. Sur la notion d'environnement, voir le chapitre intitulé « Art Without Walls », p. 170-196.

53 Voir : Michael de Courcy, « The Intermedia Catalogue » dans *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*, op. cit.

temporairement sa raison d'être, car il fut d'abord conçu pour abriter des fonctionnaires. En revanche, il est modifié afin de ressembler à des locaux administratifs et aux salles de démonstration d'un commerce de taille moyenne. N.E. Thing Co. et Théberge publient ensuite un rapport des activités de la compagnie à ce second siège social⁵⁴. Celui-ci ne recycle qu'une fraction des documents du dossier de l'exposition (n° 1343) où se joue réellement la complexité de l'intervention. Hormis les traces de la genèse du projet qui mobilise un effectif important (bien au-delà du personnel du musée), son contenu témoigne d'une porosité exceptionnelle entre la culture managériale des agences gouvernementales et les manœuvres d'un collectif d'artistes mimant le fonctionnement d'une entreprise privée⁵⁵.

Les énoncés du mandat d'organismes dressent un inventaire de services dans leurs lettres patentes et cartographient du même coup le caractère hybride des pratiques artistiques qu'ils espèrent disséminer. À quelques années d'intervalle, l'Intermedia Society (1967) et N.E. Thing Co. (1969) s'incorporent comme compagnies sans but lucratif. En détournant cette procédure d'une façon ironique, le couple dispose d'une identité de personne morale fictive, bien qu'officielle selon la loi. Les membres de la coopérative offrent quant à eux de véritables services. Dans ces deux cas, les artistes se redéfinissent comme travailleurs culturels et gestionnaires de l'information.

L'Intermedia Society partage également avec les Baxter la visée de « mettre à l'essai » les théories de Marshall McLuhan. Un communiqué publié en 1967 par la structure autogérée décrit ce programme :

To be of much value to the communicator, communication theory must be directly related to the possibilities of actual application. A number of theories put forth by McLuhan and others should be subjected to suitably controlled tests and experimentations. INTERMEDIA WILL BE ENVIRONMENTALLY ORIENTED. There will be an emphasis on environmental creation, simulation and manipulation⁵⁶.

Au cours de ses premières années d'activité, l'existence institutionnelle de l'Intermedia Society rend manifeste la praxis du décroissement esthétique proposé par Dick Higgins dans son article intitulé « Intermedia » publié en 1966, un an avant la constitution légale de la coopérative. L'auteur y postule que la séparation des disciplines artistiques correspond à la hiérarchie sociale d'une ère industrielle désormais révolue⁵⁷. Avec l'automatisation du secteur manufacturier et l'arrivée d'une économie de services (que Higgins associe au

paradigme de la société sans classes), de nouvelles formes d'expression prennent le relais, lesquelles ont pour principale caractéristique de figurer dans la zone grise entre les médias.

D'autres galeries parallèles ont existé en sol canadien lors de la première portion des années 1960⁵⁸. Or le rayonnement des activités de l'Intermedia Society inspirera l'essor des premiers centres d'artistes au cours de la décennie suivante. Plusieurs acteurs importants du milieu de l'art contemporain de Vancouver prennent part à ses ateliers techniques, réunions et performances (Werner Aellen, Iain Baxter, Michael de Courcy, Kate Craig, Arthur Erickson, Gary Lee Nova, Glenn Lewis, Eric Metcalfe, Michael Morris, David Orcutt, Al Razutis, Jack Shadbolt, Vincent Trasov, Ed Varney, etc.).

La coopérative échafaude un projet de démocratisation technologique où l'équipement acquis grâce à l'octroi de subsides gouvernementaux devient propriété commune. Elle s'assimile d'abord au modèle de parrainage d'Experiments in Art and Technology par la mise en œuvre de partenariats entre les artistes établis et le secteur industriel. Plus tard, elle offre surtout une plateforme pour les jeunes artistes qui y investissent à la fois un espace de production et un point de rencontre⁵⁹. Comme le souligne l'un des membres (Gerry Gilbert) en 1970, l'esprit macluhanien des débuts trouve alors un débouché dans la collaboration comme fin en soi :

The most important thing we do at Intermedia – what amazes everyone – is get [sic] together, and so effectively. It is our Message (just as the Bauhaus message was the Art School, and the Beatles' message was The Band)... and we are in a position to document and show how we do it. Maybe Intermedia is a model for a new kind of art school. We are certainly designing new structures of communication media: radio, tv, film, newspapers, art galleries, museums. We band together freely and make a new, open music (dance, poem...) in which the 'audience' is as creatively at work (play) as the 'performer'⁶⁰.

Son fonds d'archives, conservé par la bibliothèque des livres rares et collections spéciales de l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique, rend compte de cette entreprise utopique. Il procure aux chercheurs un matériau ethnographique exceptionnel sur la façon dont les artistes assimilent alors collectivement leurs nouvelles tâches administratives.

Les réunions plus ou moins informelles jouent un rôle de premier plan dans la création de ce cadre dialogique et les membres de

54 Pierre Théberge, *N.E. Thing Co., Rapport sur les activités de la cie N.E. Thing de Vancouver Nord, Colombie-Britannique, à la Galerie nationale du Canada, Ottawa, et autres lieux [...]*, Ottawa, Galerie Nationale du Canada, 1971, 38 feuillets.

55 Voir dans cet ouvrage le texte de David Tomas, « The Dilemma of Categories and the Over-determination of a Business Practice: N. E. Thing Co. at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, June 4–July 6, 1969 ».

56 *INTERMEDIA: A Survey of Intended Project Areas* / Intermedia Society, ca. 1967. Fonds Victor Doray, don de Victor Doray, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, boîte 2, 8.3.02.

57 Dick Higgins, « Intermedia », *The Something Else Newsletter*, vol. 1, n° 1 (février 1966).

58 En 1962, Jack Chambers, Greg Curnoe, Brian Dibb, Larry Russell, Tony Urquhart, Bernice Vincent et Don Vincent fondent la Region Gallery à London, Ontario. La coopérative 20/20 prend ensuite la relève en 1966 avec comme membres fondateurs Greg Curnoe, Tony Urquhart, Royden et David Rabinowitch, Ron Martin, Murray Favro, Jack Chambers, Geoff et Goldie Rans, John et Ray Davies.

59 *Interim Report to Canada Council for Period Ending January 31, 1968* / Intermedia Society, 1968. Fonds Intermedia Society, don d'Edwin Varney, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Vancouver, boîte 3, dossier 6.

60 Gerry Gilbert cité dans [Lettre à David Silcox] / Intermedia Society, 23 juillet 1970. Fonds Intermedia Society, boîte 3, dossier 6.

l'Intermedia Society prennent la peine d'en fournir des comptes rendus très détaillés. On y discute de la réalisation des projets en cours, mais aussi de la gouvernance de l'organisme.

Quelles stratégies faut-il adopter pour éviter d'inscrire une structure hiérarchique dans un espace ouvert favorisant l'accès aux ressources technologiques qui sont habituellement la chasse gardée de l'industrie, et donc hors de portée des artistes? Dans quelle mesure désire-t-on accorder un certain pouvoir décisionnel au directeur?

Ces réunions servent aussi à répartir les responsabilités de l'entretien des équipements. Enfin, les membres de la coopérative y planifient le contenu des demandes de subvention au Conseil des Arts du Canada et aux fondations privées⁶¹.

Le fonds d'archives recèle également des journaux de bord collectifs qui rapportent les activités quotidiennes des membres, mais dans lesquels éclatent quelquefois des conflits larvés quant au degré d'investissement de chacun. Les artistes utilisent ces nombreuses tribunes – écrites ou orales – pour redéfinir quotidiennement le mandat de l'organisme, voire remettre en question la pertinence de leur association⁶².

En 1972, ils décident de se pencher sur un corpus de documents accumulés depuis 1967 afin de concevoir une publication de nature rétrospective. Dans une lettre envoyée à Naïm Kattan⁶³, ils décrivent le livre comme un vaste échantillon d'archives, qui rassemblera des témoignages transcrits, des retombées de projets divers, ainsi que des demandes de subvention⁶⁴. Une requête d'information circule au sein de la communauté artistique de Vancouver par le truchement des listes d'adresses d'Image Bank. Plusieurs témoignages sont recueillis⁶⁵. Faute de la subvention escomptée, ce projet reste en veilleuse et est finalement abandonné⁶⁶.

Le 1^{er} juin 1972, l'Intermedia Society organise une rencontre afin de décider s'il vaut la peine de rédiger une demande au Conseil des arts⁶⁷. La dissolution de l'organisation cette même année fait naître d'autres structures dont les mandats respectifs poursuivront sa visée initiale (la Western Front Society qui rassemble certains de ses membres – Glenn Lewis, Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov, Kate Craig, Eric Metcalfe – et Video Inn, fondé, entre autres, par Michael Goldberg et consacrée à la diffusion de la vidéo).

Bien qu'ils partagent avec l'Intermedia Society le projet de favoriser l'accessibilité aux moyens technologiques (surtout la vidéo), A Space

(Toronto) et Véhicule Art (Montréal) embrassent plus directement les enjeux théoriques posés par l'essor des pratiques conceptuelles.

Chris Young fonde le Nightingale Arts Council à Toronto en 1971 avec Robert Bowers, Ian Carr-Harris, Stephen Cruise, John McEwen et l'homme d'affaires Bill Graham (ancien président de McLaren Advertising). En septembre, la galerie Nightingale, dirigée par Young depuis 1968, devient A Space (le nom ne sera utilisé qu'à partir de mars 1971, car le lieu d'abord choisi pour l'accueillir est la proie des flammes). Plus tard dans l'année, Marion Lewis se joint au conseil.

Une partie du fonds d'archives d'A Space est désormais conservée par le Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, tandis que certains documents administratifs, y compris les lettres patentes et les comptes rendus des premières réunions, se trouvent toujours dans l'immeuble du centre autogéré⁶⁸.

Cruise, Bowers et Lewis soulignent dans quelle mesure le site qu'ils occupent représente avant tout un véhicule conceptuel dont la fonction reste indéterminée et assujettie aux besoins des artistes. Le nom « A Space » produit donc un effet performatif, en ce sens qu'il programme certains usages institutionnels malgré son apparente neutralité⁶⁹.

Lors de l'incorporation du N.A.C. le 6 janvier 1971, ses membres déposent une charte qui permet d'élargir leur marge de manœuvre comme fournisseurs de services. Corollairement, A Space peut ouvrir un studio de production vidéo communautaire et exploiter un café fournissant des revenus d'appoint.

Comme d'autres structures, A Space utilise une liste d'adresses afin d'envoyer et d'acquérir de la documentation. Cruise, Bowers, Graham et Lewis (s'identifiant alors collectivement comme les « directeurs ») correspondent d'abord avec leurs pairs sous le couvert de l'anonymat. Par la suite, certains individus assurent le relais entre le conseil, les artistes et les bailleurs de fonds⁷⁰.

Le mensuel de l'organisation (intitulé *News*) publie des propositions conceptuelles reçues par la poste sans en infléchir le contenu⁷¹. Il est ensuite acheminé à plusieurs institutions et acteurs importants du monde de l'art contemporain international⁷².

Cette stratégie éclipse momentanément la figure du tiers (critique, conservateur, galeriste) pour permettre aux artistes de rendre compte

61 La Donner Foundation, entre autres.

62 Voir : *Intermedia Questionnaire*/Intermedia Society, June 12, 1970. Fonds Intermedia Society, boîte 3, dossier 11.

63 Kattan est alors directeur du Conseil des Arts.

64 [Lettre à Naïm Kattan] / Intermedia Society, March 16, 1972. Fonds Intermedia Society, boîte 3, dossier 12.

65 [Témoignages recueillis en vue de la publication] / anonyme, 15 et 16 février 1972. Fonds Intermedia Society, boîte 3, dossier 12.

66 Dans plusieurs documents, les membres de l'Intermedia Society évoquent un manuscrit qui ne se trouve pas au sein du fonds d'archives de l'organisation.

67 Notice: *General Meeting of Intermedia Society*/Intermedia Society, June 1, 1972. Fonds Intermedia Society, boîte 2, dossier 20.

68 Les membres d'A Space ont conservé les documents administratifs des années 1971 à 1979, tandis que la correspondance avec les artistes et les bailleurs de fonds (Conseil des Arts du Canada et Conseil des Arts de l'Ontario) fut léguée au Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario. Par ailleurs, la portion du corpus couvrant l'année 1970 s'avère manquante.

69 Selon une visée analogue, Jeffrey Lew crée le 112 Workshop rue Greene dans le quartier Soho de New York en 1970 pour permettre aux artistes de repousser les limites architecturales et discursives de la galerie comme lieu d'exposition. Sur l'investissement du concept d'espace dans le mandat des premières galeries parallèles à New York, voir : Martin Beck, *Alternative Space*, dans *Alternative Art New York (1965-1985)*, sous la dir. de Julie Ault, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

70 Marien Lewis sera responsable des communications au long des premières années d'activités de la structure.

71 Voir : *Information Package* / A Space, 1971; *A Space NEWS*, n° 4 (août 1971); *A Space NEWS*, n° 5-6 (septembre 1971).

72 Ayant reçu le bulletin d'information, Lucy Lippard mentionne l'ouverture d'A Space dans *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object*, op. cit., p. 215.

eux-mêmes des projets qu'ils initient. Deux expositions présentées par A Space font état de ce parallélisme entre la « production de l'espace » et la médiation de l'art.

En 1972, avec *Intervention*, Gunter Nolte dispose 100 gallons de glaise à même des feuilles de polystyrène recouvrant le sol de la galerie. La glaise sèche et craque afin de rendre perceptibles les effets normalement invisibles de facteurs environnementaux, tels que l'humidité et la température ambiante, sur la pérennité d'une situation architecturale. Une liste inventorie toutes les étapes de réalisation du projet, en commençant par les premiers contacts de Nolte avec les membres d'A Space – « A Space, hear about them ... » –, jusqu'à son départ de Toronto – « drive through fog home to Montreal »⁷³.

En mai 1973, Tom Sherman réalise une installation selon un programme analogue. Intitulée *Faraday Cage*, elle est constituée d'une structure couverte de parois métalliques interrompant les fréquences radio environnantes⁷⁴. Pour démontrer le principe du dispositif décrit dans son énoncé d'intention affiché sur le mur, Sherman escorte les visiteurs à l'intérieur de la cage, muni d'un transistor qui ne reçoit plus d'ondes. Comme il le rapportera ultérieurement :

Over the course of a couple of weeks a couple of hundred people tried the cage, with probably a dozen getting in the experiment seriously. Some spent evenings when the gallery was closed mediating and generally inhabiting the cage. People had meetings, their meals, slept and had sex in the Faraday Cage⁷⁵.

De nouveau, l'espace ne se cantonne pas dans les limites architecturales. Il est appréhendé en tant que superposition de plusieurs systèmes où l'information devient perceptible simultanément sur un plan matériel et immatériel.

Organisée au centre Saidye Bronfman, ainsi qu'à la galerie Sir George Williams en 1971 par les artistes Gary Coward, Bill Vazan et le critique George Bardo, l'exposition *45° 30' N - 73° 36' W* se distingue comme l'une des premières manifestations du conceptualisme en sol montréalais⁷⁶. Plusieurs représentants canadiens et américains de cette mouvance y participent (N.E. Thing Co., Ian Wallace, Michael Snow, Sol LeWitt, Les Levine, Françoise Sullivan, Jeff Wall, etc.).

En 1971, Coward, Vazan, ainsi qu'un groupe d'artistes de Montréal, partageant le désir d'étendre l'art au-delà des diktats du modernisme,

se réunissent pour esquisser le programme de l'organisme incorporé sous le nom Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. l'année suivante⁷⁷. Coward, Tom Dean, Jean-Marie Delavalle, François Déry, Andrew Dutkewych, Suzy Lake, Dennis Lucas, Kelly Morgan, Gunter Nolte, Milly Ristvedt, Henry Saxe, Serge Tousignant et William Vazan en sont les membres fondateurs. Le mandat de Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. reprend d'A Space cette métaphore spatiale d'une plateforme mettant au premier plan l'accessibilité des ressources architecturales, technologiques et humaines. Or cette référence au contenant neutre catalyse également le projet de bilinguisme et l'apolitisme stratégique que défendent les artistes habitant une ville toujours fortement divisée culturellement. Lors de ses premières années d'activité, la plupart des documents administratifs et publicitaires de l'organisation seront rédigés dans les deux langues officielles.

Conservé à l'Université Concordia, le fonds Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. renferme exceptionnellement des comptes rendus de réunions avant son incorporation, ainsi que les pièces justificatives des échanges avec le Conseil des Arts afin de disposer de subventions de démarrage. Outre une chronologie de faits saillants, ces documents rendent compte du passage d'un projet d'association informelle à un statut d'institution. Comme l'Intermedia Society ou A Space, les artistes essaient de définir leur nouveau rôle de travailleur culturel et d'administrateur au sein de cette structure. Les membres souhaitent rendre transparent leur processus de sélection d'expositions en évitant de projeter une image élitiste auprès du public et des bailleurs de fonds. Cette préoccupation s'exprimera entre autres, par l'intelligibilité et la pérennité des résidus que laisse chacune de leurs transactions. En témoigne une lettre envoyée le 7 mars 1972 à l'agente de programme du Conseil des Arts du Canada, Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne, où ils font état d'une volonté de produire des retombées documentaires de leurs négociations « afin de contourner les malentendus »⁷⁸.

Dans la foulée de ces projets, les membres de Véhicule tentent de constituer un centre de documentation sur l'art contemporain diffusant les publications, cartons d'invitation, communiqués, etc., accumulés lors de leurs voyages de prospection au Canada, aux États-Unis et en Europe. À l'instar de la Western Front Society et d'Art Metropole, ils conçoivent ainsi l'accessibilité de ce fonds comme une extension de leurs activités de dissémination d'information amorcées par la mise en circulation de listes d'adresses. En 1975, ils créent Artdata afin de systématiser les modalités de catalogage et d'accès aux documents qu'ils ont recueillis⁷⁹.

73 *Letter to A Space* / Gunter Nolte, 7 mai 1972. Fonds A Space, don d'A Space Gallery (1996) E.P. Taylor bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, Toronto, dossier d'artiste de Gunter Nolte. La documentation photographique de cette installation fut ensuite diffusée par le truchement du bulletin d'information de la galerie Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. Voir : *Véhicule Newsletter*, Montréal, Véhicule Press, 1973.

74 Elle reprend le principe de l'expérience réalisée par Michael Faraday en 1845.

75 Tom Sherman, *The Faraday Cage*, 2008, p. 3. Manuscrit non publié.

76 *45° 30' N - 73° 36' W + Inventory*, sous la dir. de Gary Coward et William Vazan, Montréal, Sir George Williams University, 1971, 162 p.

77 *Réunion du conseil d'administration/Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc.*, samedi 11 décembre 1971. Fonds Véhicule art (Montréal) inc. Archives de l'Université Concordia, Montréal, P027.1c/1.

78 « We appreciate your suggestion that we use the telephone – certainly a faster mean of communication – but we consider it more important that we have clear records of all negotiations and statements to avoid confusion or possible misrepresentation », extrait de *Lettre à Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne* / Milly Ristvedt, 7 mars 1972, p. 1. Fonds Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., P027.3a/1.

79 Cette collection a été partiellement intégrée au fonds du centre d'information Arttexte à Montréal.

ADRESSES

En tant que composante du système de la poste, l'adresse dispose d'une relation de contiguïté arbitraire avec l'établissement qu'elle désigne. Or lorsque les artistes tentent d'oblitérer momentanément les frontières géographiques et culturelles, ces coordonnées du siège social représentent les seuls indices qu'il existe toujours un point d'émission et de réception des messages.

Selon Marshall McLuhan, le signal électronique court-circuite les mécanismes de contrôle du capital quand il est émis au sein de circuits délocalisés. Toute forme de collectivité éloignée d'une ville métropolitaine devient ainsi virtuellement le lieu de la mise en œuvre d'une micro-économie. Dans un entretien livré à CBC en 1970, McLuhan commente l'impact de cette rupture épistémologique sur la définition de la famille nucléaire :

(Where does that information output, the fact that information is so readily available, where does that put the traditional family situation, for instance?) It means for one thing, that the computer could become the basis of a cottage economy again. [...] You could run the world's biggest factory in a kitchen by computer. In other words, the nature of instant speech – telephone, telex, computer – is to decentralize all forms of management and all forms of hardware. The computer, literally, could run the world from a cottage⁸⁰.

En exploitant la compagnie N.E. Thing Co. depuis leur maison de banlieue au 1419 Riverside Drive, Vancouver Nord, Iain et Ingrid Baxter donnent forme à ce récit d'anticipation d'une interpénétration du centre et de la périphérie. Comme l'Intermedia Society souhaitant mettre en pratique les théories de McLuhan, le couple tente de conjuguer les thèses du penseur à l'échelle de son existence familiale.

L'adresse du siège social de N.E. Thing Co. apparaît sur tous ses documents promotionnels et sa correspondance, rappelant ainsi le caractère local (et localisé) de cette existence institutionnelle, tandis que l'infrastructure forgée par les deux présidents investit un champ normalement hors de portée des artistes canadiens. Comme le constate William Wood, ces stratégies communicationnelles permettent à N.E. Thing Co. d'acquérir une réputation enviable au sein du circuit international de l'art conceptuel, alors qu'elle peut s'afficher dans la région de Vancouver et sur la côte ouest des États-Unis sous l'identité d'une entreprise légitime⁸¹.

80 Marshall McLuhan, « Interview with Ed Fitzgerald », *The New Majority*, 25 août 1970, CBC Television, cité par Janine Marchessault dans *Marshall McLuhan, Cosmic Media*, Londres, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2005, p. 220.

81 Voir : William Wood, « Capital and Subsidiary: The N.E. Thing Co. and the Revision of Conceptual Art », dans *You Are Now in the Middle of an N.E. Thing Company Landscape*, sous la dir. de Nancy Shaw, Scott Watson et William Wood, Vancouver, Fine Arts Gallery, University of British Columbia, p. 11-24.

Lors de la même période, William Vazan assemble les adresses de divers points de chute (musées, organismes autogérés, galeries commerciales, artistes) afin de former une ligne hypothétique tracée simultanément dans plusieurs lieux, traversant le Canada (*Canada Line*, 9 janvier 1970), puis la planète (*World Line*, 5 mars 1971)⁸². Reposant sur des calculs mathématiques réalisés avec l'aide d'un ingénieur, les projets génèrent des points de jonction immatériels sur une carte, mais prennent une forme tangible grâce à une bande de ruban adhésif posée au sol à l'endroit désigné dans chacun des lieux ainsi marqués. Vazan coordonne ces interventions depuis sa résidence familiale du 5171, Orleans Avenue, Montréal, qui lui sert d'atelier et de bureau. Il rassemble ensuite les pièces justificatives des échanges avec les institutions et les individus sous forme de publication⁸³. Bien que relégué au champ de l'art, ce projet se rapproche des stratégies communicationnelles de N.E. Thing Co. en élargissant le territoire de visibilité des artistes afin de pallier leur isolement géographique.

Lorsque les Baxter publient un extrait des lettres patentes de la compagnie dans la *Gazette de la Colombie-Britannique*, ils rendent perceptible le protocole qui fait transiter leur identité d'artistes vers celle de spécialistes de l'information visuelle ou sensible (sensitivity information specialists). D'une façon analogue, en figurant dans le catalogue d'une foire commerciale auprès d'IBM ou de 3M, ils espèrent faire fructifier leur « valeur ajoutée » d'experts-conseils.

Par voie de conséquence, ces manœuvres produisent une publicité involontaire au profit des technologies de télécommunication (en particulier le télex) auxquelles les Baxter ont exceptionnellement accès. L'opuscule du projet *NETWORK 70* décrit ainsi un service clés en main qu'offre N.E. Thing Co. à des « clients » du champ de l'art (galeries, musées, écoles d'art, etc.)⁸⁴. Moyennant les frais de location du télex et les coûts des transmissions, la compagnie gère les aspects logistiques (installation de la machine, activités pédagogiques, etc.). Sous prétexte de tisser un réseau international, l'intervention des Baxter étend le marché d'un outil, alors chasse gardée de l'industrie, aux institutions culturelles. Leur complexe technico-humain s'insère dans une zone grise du capitalisme tout en validant le projet de démocratisation des médias où l'artiste joue désormais le rôle d'un « personnel d'appoint »⁸⁵.

Selon Michel Warner, le public incarne un « point de convergence » d'idéologies rassemblant une masse indistincte de sujets anonymes traités en quantité négligeable comme locuteurs et devenant ainsi des récepteurs tacites dans une situation de communication⁸⁶. Cette

82 Sur le travail conceptuel de Vazan, voir : Bill Vazan : *Walking into the Vanishing Point : art conceptuel / Conceptual Art*, sous la dir. de Marie-Josée Jean et William Vazan, Montréal, VOX image contemporaine, 2009.

83 Bill Vazan, *World Line*, 1971. Livre d'artiste.

84 « INFORMATION about N.E. Thing: 'Network' 70 » / N.E. Thing Co., 1970, 10 p. Fonds Iain Baxter, boîte 12, dossier 21.

85 Le collectif britannique Artist Placement Group (créé en 1968 par John Latham) forge l'expression « incidental person » pour décrire l'identité de l'artiste lorsqu'il s'insère dans des contextes de production extérieurs au champ de l'art tels que l'industrie ou les agences gouvernementales. Le fonds d'archives de l'Artist Placement Group a été acquis par la Tate Gallery en 2005. Voir : *Art and Social Intervention: The Incidental Person*, 2005, consulté le 10 août à [http://www.tate.org.uk/online-events/webcasts/art_social_intervention_APG/default.jsp]. Les activités commerciales du couple ne se sont pas cantonnées à N.E. Thing Co. Dès 1974 ils opèrent le laboratoire de photographie N.E. Professional Photo Display Labs LTD (consacré au cibachrome), et en 1976, le restaurant Eye Scream.

86 Voir : Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York, Zone Books, 2002.

87 Proche collaborateur d'Image Bank, Glenn Lewis crée en 1970 la New York Corres Ponge Dance School of Vancouver, structure de collaboration informelle modelée sur la New York Correspondance School de Ray Johnson. Voir dans le présent ouvrage : Anne Bénichou, « Un monument au "réseau éternel". Ou la rencontre inopinée d'un artiste et d'un administrateur dans un institut national d'information scientifique et technique ».

88 Jusqu'en 1972, Gary Lee Nova prend également part aux activités d'Image Bank.

89 Leur nom s'inspire du motif de la banque d'images dans les œuvres de Claude Lévi-Strauss et de William S. Burroughs. Pour des comptes rendus exhaustifs des activités d'Image Bank entre 1969 et 1977, voir *Hand of the Spirit : Documents of the Seventies from the Morris/Trasov Archive*, sous la dir. de Scott Watson, Vancouver, UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1992, et *Golden Streams: Artists Collaborations and Exchange in the 1970s*, sous la dir. de Luis Jacob, Mississauga, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga, 2002.

90 Vincent Trasov adopte ainsi l'identité de M. Peanut Planters tandis que Michael Morris utilise les pseudonymes Marcel Idea et Marcel Dot pour correspondre avec ses pairs. Ce jeu de rôles s'étend simultanément à l'ensemble des membres du réseau.

91 Voir : *The Search for the Spirit: General Idea 1968-1975*, sous la dir. de Fern Bayer et Christina Ritchie, Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1997.

92 En 1970, Image Bank participe à l'exposition de la New York Correspondance [sic] School au Whitney Museum of American Art. Soucieux d'établir des généalogies, certains historiens inscrivent leur travail dans la foulée de l'art postal. Or Morris et Trasov (autant que Ray Johnson) rejettent ce mouvement qu'ils jugent construit après coup par la critique.

93 Sur l'importance du concept de réseau éternel pour les artistes canadiens, voir : *Robert Filliou: From Poetical to Political Economy*, Vancouver, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 1995; Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administration of Art and Culture*, op. cit., p. 16.

94 Or il est préférable d'inscrire cette filiation dans une plus vaste formation discursive et éviter ainsi d'en faire le point d'origine d'un imaginaire social naissant lors de cette période.

masse reste pourtant un objet social virtuel, car elle produit toujours une fiction et non un groupe dénombrable qu'il serait possible de nommer. Les contre-publics partagent avec les publics un mode d'adresse imaginaire, mais ceux-ci circonscrivent d'une façon précise les destinataires et destinataires des messages. N.E. Thing Co. et William Vazan utilisent les technologies du secteur tertiaire pour s'octroyer une marge de manœuvre dans le champ élargi de l'art du début des années 1970. Image Bank et General Idea détournent quant à eux le système de la poste comme outil *ad hoc* afin de cristalliser un espace d'échange partiellement hors de portée de ce champ et d'une hégémonie des médias de masse⁸⁷.

Lorsqu'ils fondent Image Bank en 1969 à Vancouver, Michael Morris et Vincent Trasov⁸⁸ espèrent saper la mainmise d'ayants droit commerciaux sur la culture visuelle des années 1950 et 1960⁸⁹. La règle tacite d'annuler toute propriété intellectuelle encourage l'appropriation des énoncés d'autrui et permet de multiplier les jeux de rôles (emploi de pseudonymes, etc.) au sein d'un réseau de correspondants⁹⁰. Cette même année, General Idea émerge d'une collaboration entre AA Bronson (Michael Tims), Felix Partz (Ron Gabe) et Jorge Zontal (Slobodan Saia-Levy) à Toronto⁹¹.

Le projet de décentralisation culturelle de ces groupes reprend plusieurs stratégies des avant-gardes historiques (Dada en particulier) et de Fluxus, mais Ray Johnson représente leur principale influence⁹². Depuis 1962, ce dernier envoie des collages avec la consigne d'y intervenir et de les réacheminer au destinataire. Il fonde ensuite la New York Correspondance [sic] School selon le dessein de donner une forme fictive et effective aux modes d'échange qu'il suscite.

Le concept de réseau éternel forgé par Robert Filliou et George Brecht dans la foulée des événements de Mai 68 se décline d'après un programme utopique semblable en supposant que les artistes forment une communauté faisant l'économie des unités de mesure institutionnelles⁹³. L'essor des premières structures autogérées fut longtemps assimilé au recyclage des idées de Filliou (son ascendant est notable auprès de nombreux collectifs d'artistes canadiens – surtout anglophones)⁹⁴.

En 1970, Image Bank diffuse un faire-part avec sa première liste de requêtes d'images. Celui-ci est accompagné de la reproduction d'une photographie de Nancy Berg, mannequin des années 1950, greffée de la mention « Image of the Month ». Cette liste est destinée à ses seuls contributeurs. Image Bank distribue ensuite son

unique rapport annuel (année 1971) où le collectif produit un bilan des activités en cours et inventorie les services qu'il espère offrir. Cet exercice définit de nouveau la marge de manœuvre que s'octroient les artistes en greffant une valeur sociale intrinsèque à la dissémination de l'information⁹⁵.

Des outils de médiation en aval doivent cependant dessiner la carte de cette plateforme décentralisée afin que ses utilisateurs puissent déterminer ses limites discursives. Avec la collaboration de Talonbooks, Morris et Trasov publient une première version de la liste alphabétique exhaustive des individus répertoriés, ainsi que leurs adresses⁹⁶. Ce bottin comprend une sélection d'images recueillies par le truchement de requêtes. Sa diffusion fait boule de neige en déployant le réseau d'une façon exponentielle.

Le concept de contre-public est généralement associé aux espaces discursifs investis par des groupes subalternes. Michael Warner précise néanmoins que ceux-ci miment les protocoles d'institutions hégémoniques lorsqu'ils créent leurs propres véhicules de communication⁹⁷. En détournant le système de la poste, Image Bank et General Idea étendent la portée d'activités de recyclage à la logique de mécanismes qui font circuler l'information dans la société capitaliste des années 1970.

Avec *Orgasm Energy Chart* (1970), General Idea demande à des correspondants d'enregistrer la fréquence de leurs orgasmes et d'acheminer ces renseignements au « siège social » de l'entreprise. Pour ce faire, le collectif conçoit un formulaire *ad hoc* composé d'une grille de 31 jours (axe vertical) et d'un quadrillage de cases découpé en tranches de 15 minutes afin d'inscrire chacune des occurrences de l'« événement » (axe horizontal). D'autres données sont également sollicitées : date de naissance, lieu de l'orgasme et sexe du participant. Un tableau synoptique est prévu, mais jamais réalisé⁹⁸. Réifiant l'identité de ses pairs, General Idea simule sur le mode ironique la neutralité « administrative » du conceptualisme tout en mettant à mal l'utopie des années 1960 de fusionner l'art avec la vie quotidienne. Dans un entretien récent, AA Bronson relate son expérience du collectivisme, en commençant par la commune qu'il a habitée à Winnipeg lors des années 1960, jusqu'au continuum entre la maison louée par le collectif et les bureaux de *FILE Magazine* :

« I think at the very beginning, everybody in the group was involved in some sort of way, however peripherically. It was just a part of life. Making FILE was part of our daily life. »⁹⁹

95 Image Bank, *Legal Tender: Annual Report*, Vancouver, Intermedia, 1972.

96 *International Image Exchange Directory*, Vancouver, Talonbooks, 1972.

97 Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, op. cit.

98 Voir : *General Idea: Editions: 1967-1995*, sous la dir. de Barbara Fischer, Mississauga, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga, 2003, p. 45.

99 AA Bronson/Dont Rhine, « Is This Where We Should Begin? » dans *Make Everything New: A Project on Communism*, Londres, Bookworks/Project Arts Center, p. 38-53.

Contrairement à Image Bank, General Idea décide de s'incorporer au début des années 1970 sous le nom Art Official pour offrir des services à ses pairs. L'existence de cette personne morale se manifeste d'abord par le projet de publier *FILE Magazine*. Pendant ses premières années d'activité, la revue déplace les fragments d'échange de correspondance – d'abord réservés aux seuls destinataires – vers l'espace de la publication. L'éditorial du premier numéro décrit cet « organe » pancanadien comme un point de chute entre une galerie et la suivante (« the space hidden between one gallery and the next ») où converge le contenu de fichiers décentralisés¹⁰⁰. L'organisation fonde ensuite Art Metropole (1974) afin de diffuser ces archives ainsi que des livres d'artistes.

Dans les deux cas, le collectif détourne subtilement une structure existante. *FILE* reconfigure la maquette graphique de la revue américaine *LIFE*. Le papier de correspondance et la couverture du premier catalogue d'Art Metropole imitent la façade de l'édifice du centre auto-géré tirée d'un document de 1911 (lorsque cet immeuble de la rue Yonge abritait un magasin de matériel d'artistes). General Idea et Art Metropole disposent cependant de fonds d'archives distincts, conservés au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada (Ottawa).

Les projets de correspondance d'Image Bank et de General Idea investissent un bagage de stéréotypes issus d'une génération antérieure, particulièrement celle qui lisait la revue *LIFE* dans les années 1950 et 1960. Les artistes suivent partiellement la méthode proposée par Roland Barthes qui consiste à établir un répertoire de nouveaux mythes en arrachant des signifiants de la culture populaire aux premiers contextes de leur médiatisation chargés d'idéologie¹⁰¹.

Avec *Cultural Ecology Project* (1972), Image Bank demande à ses correspondants de faire parvenir des « piss pics » (images d'urine) à la critique américaine Barbara Rose (l'orthographe modifiée de son nom évoque Rose Sélavy, l'*alter ego* de Marcel Duchamp). D'une façon prévisible, certains destinataires citent les œuvres de Duchamp et des références de l'histoire de l'art (le Manneken-Pis) dans leurs réponses. D'autres envoient du matériel pornographique ou scatologique qui met à l'épreuve l'étanchéité du système de la poste comme outil de communication parallèle.

Par contraste, le conservatisme d'une génération antérieure représente l'objet d'étude d'un projet également réalisé en 1972. Image Bank formule cette fois la consigne suivante : « Inventeurs d'aujourd'hui, planifiez désormais pour demain : jetez un coup

100 « The phenomenon of FILE and of files emerges from the underbrush of available art, shuffling its leaves in patterned disarray. Files are the dead matter of appropriated ideas, the manure of Rat city, the space hidden between one gallery and the next ». General Idea, « Editorial: Some Juicy and Malicious Gossip », *FILE*, vol. 1, n° 1 (avril 1972), p. 2.

101 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1957.

d'œil au futur. Faites parvenir votre image de 1984 à Image Bank ». Tirées d'un ensemble de sources des années 1950 et 1960 – *LIFE*, *Popular Science*, *Fortune*, etc. –, les images acheminées par les correspondants évoquent des représentations obsolètes du progrès et de la technologie tout en ramenant au premier plan les désirs et les hantises de cette période. Subséquemment, ces constellations de lieux communs deviennent le ferment de plusieurs collaborations au sein du réseau. Cumulant des récits d'anticipation sous forme de performances et de produits dérivés, General Idea imagine un pavillon dont la construction est différée jusqu'à 1984. Avec sa *Time Capsule*, le collectif californien Ant Farm stocke des aliments et des médicaments représentatifs de l'année 1972 dans un réfrigérateur scellé jusqu'en 1984¹⁰².

En 1973, Glenn Lewis réquisitionne des objets d'usage courant, des assemblages divers, etc. Présentées ensuite dans des boîtiers transparents (chacun attribué par les participants à une année choisie entre 1620 et 1984), ces contributions forment la structure murale intitulée *Great Wall of 1984* de la bibliothèque du Conseil national de recherches du Canada (Ottawa)¹⁰³.

Cependant, cette plateforme ne se cantonne pas dans la circulation des seuls envois photographiques ou textuels.

David Joselit fait état du paradoxe que représente la transmission télévisuelle d'images pour les artistes œuvrant dans les années 1960 et 1970. Reposant sur l'instabilité du signal électronique et la rétroaction, la vidéo encourage d'emblée des stratégies de dissémination d'information. Par contraste, la télévision dépend d'un réseau privé duquel la plupart des citoyens sont exclus d'office en tant que participants et dès lors relégués au rôle de spectateurs passifs¹⁰⁴. Plusieurs artistes et activistes espèrent libérer ce signal d'un dispositif de filtrage qui en fait une marchandise livrée unilatéralement dans la sphère publique.

En 1967, la compagnie japonaise Sony commercialise le système vidéo portatif demi-pouce noir et blanc Portapak, composé d'une caméra et d'un magnétoscope. Sa mise en marché coïncide avec l'émergence de collectifs d'artistes s'octroyant une identité de travailleurs culturels selon le modèle de l'autogestion. Plusieurs d'entre eux partagent le mandat de familiariser leurs pairs, ainsi que des groupes de militants, aux possibilités de la technologie vidéo. À cet effet, Raindance Corporation (New York) publie la revue *Radical Software* en 1970, qui devient graduellement la tribune d'individus ralliés autour du nouvel outil. Le principe de la rétroaction propre au signal électronique est

102 Finalement ouvert en 2002. Voir : *Ant Farm: 1968-1976*, sous la dir. de Constance M. Lewallen et Steve Seid, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2004, p. 108-109.

103 Pour une analyse détaillée de cette œuvre, voir dans le présent ouvrage : Anne Bénichou, « Un monument au 'réseau éternel'. Ou la rencontre inopinée d'un artiste et d'un administrateur dans un institut national d'information scientifique et technique ».

104 David Joselit, *Feedback: Television Against Democracy*, Cambridge et Londres, MIT Press, 2007.

redoublé dans ces documents imprimés encourageant son appropriation et établissant un discours sur ses usages. Ce projet s'échafaude simultanément au Canada.

Grâce à la distribution de formulaires idoines, Michael Goldberg de l'Intermedia Society (avec la collaboration d'Image Bank) recueille des adresses de vidéastes et une brève description de la façon dont chacun emploie le système Portapak. Ces formulaires sont, en outre, diffusés dans plusieurs périodiques (*Radical Software*, *artscanada*, *FILE Magazine*, bulletins d'information du programme Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle de l'Office national du film du Canada, etc.)¹⁰⁵ Les données se côtoient ensuite au sein de répertoires (Video Exchange Directories) permettant à des vidéastes participants d'échanger des bandes par la poste. En guise de préambule de sa première version (1971), Goldberg y explicite son mode d'utilisation :

This directory has been started to facilitate the exchange of small format video-tapes; so that more people may gain confidence in their eye. I do not wish to become a bureaucratic central or distribution agent, for my time is devoted to my sculpture and work with VTR. Exchange here means information sharing: people will have to contact each other directly¹⁰⁶.

Outre cette fonction de catalyseur d'échange d'information, Michael Goldberg défend également la libre circulation des bandes vidéo hors des restrictions imposées par les postes frontaliers canadiens traitant encore ce type d'objet comme une marchandise¹⁰⁷. À l'instar des répertoires d'Image Bank, les coordonnées d'utilisateurs de Portapak circulent uniquement dans le périmètre du réseau formé par les individus qui remplissent les formulaires. Or l'ordre alphabétique rapproche arbitrairement des groupes dont les allégeances idéologiques sont diamétralement opposées, alors que la technologie vidéographique n'avait pas été conçue dans la perspective d'un (més) usage social. Le répertoire place ainsi sous la même rubrique le parti des Black Panthers en Algérie, des collectifs de vidéastes américains ou canadiens tels que Raindance/Radical Software et des institutions culturelles comme le Musée des beaux-arts du Canada¹⁰⁸.

ÉTAT PROVIDENCE CYBERNÉTIQUE

À partir de la fin des années 1960, les artistes tablent sur la convergence exceptionnelle entre leur projet autogestionnaire et les politiques de gouvernance décentralisée instaurées par Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

¹⁰⁵ *Radical Software*, vol. 1, n° 4 (été 1971). Numéro consacré en partie à la vidéo au Canada; *artscanada*, (octobre-novembre 1971); *FILE*, vol. 1, n° 1 (avril 1972); *Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle Access*, sous la dir. d'Elizabeth Prinn et Dorothy Todd Hénaut, Montréal, National Film Board of Canada/Office National du Film du Canada. Bulletin d'information du programme.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Goldberg [avec la collaboration d'Image Bank], *Video Exchange Directory*, Vancouver, Intermedia, 1971. Ce répertoire est ensuite ponctuellement mis à jour.

¹⁰⁷ Voir : Michael Goldberg, *The Accessible Portapak Manual*, Vancouver, 1974.

¹⁰⁸ En 1973, avec la collaboration de Trisha Hardman, Goldberg organise la conférence Matrix à Vancouver. Comme droit d'entrée, les participants doivent faire don d'une bande. Ce mode d'échange permet de constituer la collection du centre Vidéo Inn/Video Satellite Exchange Society fondé cette même année.

¹⁰⁹ Voir les bulletins d'information du programme *Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle*, n° 1 (printemps 1968) et n° 8 (printemps 1972).

¹¹⁰ D'abord sous la gouverne de l'ONF, le centre s'incorpore en 1973.

¹¹¹ Voir dans le présent ouvrage, le texte Marion Froger, « Les dynamiques collectives au Vidéographe (1970-1975) ».

¹¹² *Youth 71: An Inquiry into the Transient Youth and Opportunities for Youth Programs in the Summer of 1971*, Ottawa, Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 70. Notre traduction.

¹¹⁴ Image Bank et General Idea, entre autres.

¹¹⁵ Les projets admissibles couvrent l'ensemble du spectre des services habituellement offerts par le secteur communautaire : amélioration des conditions de vie des personnes âgées et des enfants, emploi des membres de groupes autochtones afin de bonifier des installations, soutenir des organismes culturels et sociaux en amplifiant leurs programmes, réparer des immeubles, etc.

¹¹⁶ Outre les documents issus de fonds d'archives des structures autogérées (cités le cas échéant), les faits relatés ici sur l'histoire du Programme des initiatives locales sont tirés des sources suivantes : *Guide à l'intention des parrains, Programme des initiatives locales : 1973-1974, Direction de la création d'emplois*, Ottawa, Main-d'œuvre et Immigration / Manpower and Immigration, 1973; Donald E Blake, « LIP and Partisanship: An Analysis of the Local Initiatives Program », *Canadian Public Policy = Analyse de politiques*, vol. 1, n° 1 (hiver 1976), p. 17-32; Paul D. Shafer, *Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy*, Paris, UNESCO, 1976.

En 1968, l'ONF et le Secrétariat d'État dirigent le programme Challenge for Change (volet anglais)/Société nouvelle (volet français), qui permet aux citoyens d'utiliser les moyens de production audiovisuels (film 16 mm, vidéo portative) pour rendre compte eux-mêmes des enjeux de leur vie quotidienne¹⁰⁹. Le corpus de films produit dans ce cadre prépare le terrain aux programmes subséquents en fournissant les pièces justificatives du succès d'une telle entreprise. Robert Forget – producteur de l'Office national du film – crée Vidéographe (Montréal) en 1971 comme l'une des retombées de Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle¹¹⁰.

Sur dépôt d'un projet, Vidéographe offre les ressources nécessaires à quiconque veut réaliser des documentaires et des essais expérimentaux. Chacune des étapes de production est prise en charge : de la location du système Portapak aux présentations publiques de l'œuvre dans le « vidéothéâtre ». Ayant pignon sur rue, les locaux du centre sont ouverts en permanence (24 heures par jour). De plus, son équipe conçoit et commercialise un module (l'éditomètre) configuré afin de faciliter le montage vidéo alors malaisé. Or Vidéographe ne se cantonne pas dans ce seul mandat de pourvoyeur d'équipement. D'autres outils de communication font rejaillir ces documents au sein du paysage audiovisuel québécois. Grâce à des fiches cataloguant les vidéogrammes achevés, les citoyens éloignés de la région montréalaise peuvent se procurer gratuitement des copies en acheminant une bobine vierge. Le réseau câblé est également utilisé comme moyen de distribution novateur¹¹¹.

En 1970, le taux de chômage des jeunes atteint des sommets sans précédent et Trudeau craint la montée en flèche de soulèvements populaires. Le Secrétariat d'État met donc à l'essai le programme *Opportunities for Youth* (Jeunesse Canada au travail) pour offrir aux chômeurs la possibilité de créer des emplois par le truchement de projets communautaires¹¹². Lors d'une allocution, le secrétaire Gérard Pelletier affirme : « la portée du programme ne sera limitée que par l'imagination des jeunes eux-mêmes. »¹¹³ Cette rhétorique inspirée des slogans de Mai 68 (l'imagination au pouvoir) interpellera les groupes ciblés. Cependant, ceux-ci ne verront pas se profiler les mécanismes de contrôle sous le couvert de cette utopie d'émancipation édulcorée.

Quelques collectifs d'artistes soumettent alors des projets¹¹⁴, mais c'est le Programme des initiatives locales (PIL) qui donnera le coup d'envoi aux centres autogérés tels qu'on les connaît aujourd'hui¹¹⁵. Il est lancé par le ministère de la Main-d'œuvre et de l'Immigration pour réduire provisoirement le taux de chômage encore très élevé entre novembre 1971 et mai 1972¹¹⁶.

Dans ses objectifs, P.I.L. se rapproche d'O.F.Y., mais il ne se limite pas cette fois aux jeunes. Aussi, la complexité exacerbée des procédures d'inscription dissipe en partie les critiques des citoyens arguant que la plupart des bénéficiaires sont exempts des compétences nécessaires pour faire l'économie d'une structure hiérarchique. Les demandeurs doivent donc désormais remplir un formulaire fourni par les bureaux régionaux du ministère de la Main-d'œuvre et y joindre une description détaillée du projet, ainsi que des lettres d'appui d'individus haut placés ou exerçant une profession respectée (médecin, avocat, conseiller municipal, directeur d'école).

Entre 1971 et 1973, la plupart des structures autogérées soumettent des projets à ce programme. L'Intermedia Society utilise le profilage sociologique pour accumuler des données sur diverses communautés de Vancouver¹¹⁷. Le compositeur R. Murray Schafer y met à l'essai une méthode de collecte d'échantillons de bruits urbains lui permettant d'analyser le degré de pollution sonore environnementale. Dans la foulée des activités d'Image Bank, Michael Morris et Vincent Trasov établissent un répertoire de fichiers décentralisés documentant les projets complétés au cours de la période d'emploi des artistes. General Idea conçoit la revue *FILE* décrite comme un « organe pancanadien » (transcanada organ) réalisé par « et pour » les artistes¹¹⁸. Une subvention lui sera accordée afin d'engager 14 personnes et d'assurer les coûts de production des trois premiers numéros. Au final, 25 individus vivant dans plusieurs villes canadiennes seront rémunérés. Les demandes d'A Space et de Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. ont une portée plus pragmatique, bonifiant des secteurs d'activité en place lors de la constitution des organismes. A Space propose ainsi d'initier la population de Toronto à l'usage de l'équipement vidéo Portapak et de publier un bottin trilingue (anglais, français, italien) des ressources culturelles de la ville¹¹⁹. Celui-ci renferme des fiches décrivant les centres communautaires, théâtres, librairies, ainsi que les galeries parallèles et groupes d'artistes¹²⁰. Il est imprimé au moyen d'une presse offset qu'A Space a empruntée à Coach House Press. Le projet de Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. crée 18 postes temporaires pour mettre en branle des activités pédagogiques et renforcer le fonctionnement de sa maison d'édition¹²¹. Dix personnes remplissent des tâches de gestion et de diffusion d'information. Les huit autres employés gèrent la coopérative d'imprimerie offset qui produit l'ensemble des publications de l'organisme et seconde les artistes de Montréal désireux d'explorer les possibilités du média imprimé¹²². Grâce à ce programme, les membres de Véhicule Art font exceptionnellement se croiser le travail de médiation culturelle avec les enjeux théoriques de l'art conceptuel. À la demande de William Vazan,

Sol LeWitt envoie des instructions pour réaliser l'un de ses « Wall Drawings » sur les murs de la galerie. Afin d'inaugurer ses activités pédagogiques, le centre invite également les membres de divers établissements d'enseignement (secondaires, universitaires) à exécuter le dessin dans leurs classes. L'écart entre la partition de LeWitt et sa mise en forme suscite alors des débats quant aux limites de la notion d'auteur lorsque la proposition artistique fonctionne sur le mode de la délégation¹²³.

Bien que les artistes soient déjà rompus aux tâches qu'exige leur nouveau rôle d'administrateurs, ils définissent ici un ensemble de services et, corollairement, les catégories d'employés que nécessite la mise en œuvre des projets.

La plupart des structures autogérées n'auraient pas passé le cap de leurs premières années d'existence en l'absence de ces programmes. Cependant, de nombreux bénéficiaires relèvent que la somme de travail nécessaire à la rédaction des rapports et autres pièces justificatives exigées par le ministère de la Main-d'œuvre dépasse le temps consacré aux projets eux-mêmes¹²⁴.

Le programme Explorations établi par le Conseil des Arts du Canada prend partiellement la relève du P.I.L. en 1973. Il marque l'ouverture de cet organisme à de nouveaux besoins issus des changements sociaux de la fin des années 1960 et du début de la décennie suivante sans se cantonner cette fois aux tentatives de réduire le taux de chômage. Tous les projets sont admissibles pourvu qu'ils n'appartiennent pas aux catégories disciplinaires déjà subventionnées. Dans la foulée d'une décentralisation culturelle caractéristique des années 1970, le Conseil s'assure que ses outils publicitaires atteignent les villes éloignées des grands centres urbains et envoie quelquefois des agents sur place. Les membres des jurys de pairs sont également sélectionnés au sein de chacune des circonscriptions provinciales. Les décisions font ensuite l'objet d'une approbation par un comité national.

Certaines structures autogérées et collectifs d'artistes profitent de cette manne, dont General Idea qui accède ainsi à des fonds de démarrage afin de constituer Art Metropole en 1973 (après une première demande infructueuse auprès du P.I.L.).

Le 21 novembre 1969, Pierre Elliott Trudeau affirme : « en transformant les mécanismes de contrôle de l'information, les nombreuses techniques de la cybernétique transformeront également toute notre société. Avec cette connaissance, nous serons alertes et cesserons de

117 Application to : The Local Initiatives Program, Department of Manpower and Immigration, Intermedia Society, 2023 East 1st Avenue for: Intermedia Project for the Greening of the Community / Intermedia (Glenn Lewis, Gary Lee-Nova, Ian Wallace, Michael Morris, Joe Kyle), 1971. Morris/Trasov Archive, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, boîte C19, numéro d'accession 30.03.

118 Re: General Idea Application number 311-178 to the Local Initiatives Program, Toronto / General Idea, c. 1972; Final Report - LIP / General Idea, juin 1972. Fonds Art Metropole, Bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa, série 5, boîte 2, dossier intitulé « L.I.P. file - 1971-1972 ».

119 Vehicle Handbook of Toronto Cultural Resources / Manuel de ressources culturelles de Toronto / Manuale delle risorse culturali di Toronto, sous la dir. d'Isobel Harry et Marlene Sober, Toronto, A Space, 1972.

120 Nightingale Art Council / Robert Bowers, Stephen Cruise, 21 septembre 1972. Fonds A Space, don d'A Space Gallery (1996), E.P. Taylor bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, Toronto, boîte 87, dossier intitulé « 71/71 Local Initiatives Program Grant ».

121 Véhicule "phase II": A Proposed Local Initiative Project in Reply to Question Number Seven, Manpower and Immigration : Local Initiatives Program 1972-1973 / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1972. Fonds Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., P027.1b/2.

122 Voir dans cet ouvrage le texte de Felicity Tayler : « Publication as Alternative Space ».

123 LeWitt Education Report / Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., 1973. Fonds Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc., P027.5b/12.

124 Voir : Stuart Brommer, « Business as usual: The Newest Utopia », *FILE*, vol. 1, n° 1 (avril 1972), p. 15, 24.

nous soumettre aux aléas du destin »¹²⁵. Le croisement du paradigme de l'autogestion avec les mécanismes de contrôle de l'État-providence cristallise cette social-démocratie « cybernétique ».

Les demandes de subvention issues des structures autogérées rendent compte de la portée des tâches accomplies pour qu'une mesure incitative de rétribution du travail bénévole renforce l'obligation de renouveler le financement. En contrepartie, les artistes doivent fournir le matériau documentaire aux agences gouvernementales afin qu'elles produisent des statistiques et des rapports sur leur réinsertion dans le contrat social. Le coefficient de liberté octroyée est toujours inversement proportionnel à l'ensemble des efforts investis pour prouver que celle-ci sera profitable au plus grand nombre et ne constituera pas une dépense injustifiée de fonds publics.

Les archives d'Intermedia Society, d'A Space et de Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. renferment de la correspondance qu'échangent alors les artistes avec les agents de programmes du Conseil des Arts du Canada (David Silcox et Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne) où l'on constate que les ententes sont quelquefois négociées à l'amiable. Or la rencontre du citoyen et de l'État ne se produit jamais en vis-à-vis, mais par le truchement d'un formulaire¹²⁶. Celui-ci joue le rôle d'interface entre l'individu et un système qu'il perçoit en filigrane dans la part écrite le sommant de fournir de l'information sur lui-même. Les parties vierges indiquent quant à elles l'interstice dont il dispose afin d'y inscrire sa subjectivité. Le formulaire « recrute » donc des sujets par acte d'interpellation (selon la portée que Louis Althusser conférerait à ce concept dans les années 1970)¹²⁷. Depuis la création du Conseil des Arts du Canada, il fait partie intégrante de la vie quotidienne des artistes¹²⁸. Par ailleurs, ceux-ci conçoivent également des formulaires qu'ils font circuler grâce aux listes d'adresses pour prélever une autre série de données auprès de leurs pairs¹²⁹. Enfin, les artistes parviennent à habiter les deux versants de cette interface entre l'État et les structures autogérées en siégeant aux jurys et en occupant des postes d'agents de programme du Conseil des Arts vers le milieu des années 1970.

FIN DE L'UTOPIE

Pourtant, dès 1975, le Conseil n'arrive plus à contenir la prolifération des centres d'artistes et gèle l'aide aux organismes tout juste incorporés afin d'augmenter les subventions de ceux qui ont pris leur essor au début de la décennie¹³⁰.

Lors de la même période, le coefficient politique du concept d'information définissant le projet collectiviste des années 1960 montre ses lacunes. Plusieurs artistes féministes constatent que l'utopie démocratique des systèmes ouverts inspirés de la cybernétique reproduit l'asymétrie sexuelle ou économique présente dans d'autres secteurs de la société¹³¹. En mimant des modèles issus de la culture du management et des agences gouvernementales, elle duplique les relations de pouvoir inhérentes à ces structures. Les tâches de secrétariat sont ainsi confiées aux membres féminins de l'Intermedia Society, alors que les postes de direction restent la chasse gardée de leurs collègues masculins.

Malgré la grande place qu'Iain Baxter lui accorde au sein de N.E. Thing Co. comme coprésidente, Ingrid Baxter n'occupe pas le devant de la scène¹³². Le divorce du couple en 1978 mettra fin à la compagnie sous l'identité de laquelle ils ont œuvré depuis 1966.

Le laps de temps entre 1971 et 1974 représente également le moment fort du réseau de correspondance. À partir de 1973, celui-ci s'effrite de l'intérieur. Le nombre de participants ayant augmenté, la plupart des artistes qui l'avaient initié ne répondent plus systématiquement aux envois de leurs pairs.

Le 5 avril de cette même année, Ray Johnson annonce la mort de la New York Correspondance School dans les pages du *New York Times*. General Idea prend le relais avec le numéro de *FILE* du mois de septembre en publiant une lettre de Robert Cumming où celui-ci se plaint de recevoir un lot de correspondance médiocre¹³³.

En 1974, Willoughby Sharp, Lowell Darling, General Idea et Image Bank (sous l'égide de la Western Front) organisent *Decca Dance : Art's Birthday* à Hollywood (États-Unis). La cérémonie de remise de prix est un prétexte pour rassembler une dernière fois (paradoxalement pour la première fois en vis-à-vis) des individus et des collectifs d'artistes échangeant par voie postale.

La même année, *FILE* met à jour les répertoires d'adresses et de requêtes d'images compilées depuis la fin des années 1960 par Image Bank et General Idea¹³⁴. Kate Craig, Michael Morris et Vincent Trasov de la Western Front Society en assemblent la matrice graphique envoyée ensuite à General Idea. Ce travail collectif représente l'ultime collaboration entre les artistes de Toronto et Vancouver. Dans les numéros subséquents, la revue cesse de diffuser cet outil et marque ainsi la dissolution d'une communauté de pairs comme contre-public.

¹²⁵ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, bureau du premier Ministre, « Notes for Remarks by the Prime Minister at the Harrison Liberal Conference », Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia, nov. 21, 1969, p. 7, cité dans : A. Paul Ross, « From System to Serendipity: The Practice and Study of Public Policy in the Trudeau Years », *Canadian Public Administration / Administration publique canadienne* (hiver 1982), p. 520-544.

¹²⁶ Sur la fonction du formulaire comme technologie de gouvernementalité, voir Jon Agar, *The Government Machine*, Londres et Cambridge, MIT Press, 2003.

¹²⁷ Louis Althusser, « Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État (Notes pour une recherche) », *La Pensée*, n° 151 (juin 1970).

¹²⁸ En 1974, General Idea reçoit le nouveau formulaire du Conseil des Arts de l'Ontario accompagné d'une lettre informant les demandeurs de bourses que l'outil est désormais adapté au traitement de données par ordinateur. *Lettre à M. Michael Tims (General Idea) / Naomi G. Lightbourn, executive Secretary, Ontario Art Council*, 15 January, 1974. Fonds Art Metropole, Bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa, série 5, boîte 2, dossier intitulé : « Ontario Arts Council (1974-1976) ».

¹²⁹ Dès ses premières années d'activité, Véhicule Art (Montréal) inc. façonne des outils administratifs adaptés au contexte de l'autogestion. Ceux qui aspirent à obtenir une exposition remplissent un formulaire où ils justifient le choix de cette galerie. Véhicule produit également des questionnaires pour sonder la communauté d'utilisateurs de ses services et les institutions culturelles montréalaises.

¹³⁰ Voir : *Les centres d'artistes : Vingt ans d'histoire 1972 à 1992*, Ottawa, Service des arts visuels, Conseil des Arts du Canada, 1993.

¹³¹ Comme l'indique Lucy Lippard, la dissolution de l'Art Workers Coalition est due en grande partie au groupe féministe qui crée le *Woman Artist in Revolution* et l'*Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee* (1970). Voir : Lucy Lippard, « Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York since 1969 » dans *Alternative Art New York (1965-1985)*, op. cit., p. 79-114.

¹³² Cependant, un témoignage récent restitue le rôle de premier plan qu'elle joue alors. Voir : « Ingrid Baxter with Grant Arnold » dans *Ruins in Process : Vancouver Art in the Sixties*, op. cit.

¹³³ *FILE magazine*, vol. 2, n° 3 (septembre 1973), p. 40.

¹³⁴ *FILE magazine*, vol. 2, n° 5 (février 1974). Titre du numéro : « Annual Artists Directory ».

Lors de cette période d'essoufflement, Time Incorporated intente un procès au collectif General Idea, l'accusant d'utiliser illicitement la maquette graphique de la revue *LIFE*. En 1977, Image Bank présente sa deuxième exposition de cartes postales et reçoit une mise en demeure d'une compagnie américaine portant le même nom. Ces deux litiges s'expliquent par la visibilité médiatique dont jouissent alors les artistes devenus des acteurs importants du champ de l'art contemporain canadien. Contrairement à General Idea qui gagne son procès et publie *FILE* jusqu'en 1989, Image Bank abandonne la cause et adopte le nom Morris/Trasov Archive¹³⁵.

DOMICILIATION

L'incorporation d'une organisation dans le registre des compagnies sans but lucratif produit un siège social qui s'accompagne d'une obligation de conserver des comptes rendus de réunions marquant, du même coup, la constitution d'un fonds d'archives. Lors de la première portion des années 1970, les fonds de structures autogérées conjuguent ces résidus de transactions administratives avec des retombées de projets conceptuels échangés par la poste.

Pendant un certain laps de temps, ces archives se trouvent dans une zone de latence et sont invisibles, car le réseau de correspondance se dissout. Cet intervalle coïncide avec le retour en force de formes d'art comme la peinture figurative néo-expressionniste à la fin des années 1970 et, corollairement, l'éclipse des stratégies investissant la valeur sociale intrinsèque du concept d'information. La fondation d'ANNPAC (1976) met également un terme à la porosité entre les pratiques artistiques et l'administration. En témoigne le papier à lettres neutre qu'utilisent désormais les artistes/administrateurs pour se représenter auprès de leurs pairs et du Conseil des Arts du Canada.

Au cours des années 1990, l'art conceptuel comme mouvement historique resurgit cependant de ce trou noir afin de faire l'objet de nombreuses expositions et publications. Dans les grands centres, la réévaluation de ces pratiques facilitera l'incorporation graduelle de leur infrastructure documentaire (livres d'artistes, bandes vidéo, catalogues d'exposition d'époque) au sein du marché secondaire¹³⁶. Elle s'accompagnera également de l'acquisition par les musées et les universités des fonds de plusieurs artistes de cette génération.

Hormis le désir de rendre accessible un patrimoine, les motifs poussant certains d'entre eux à léguer ainsi leurs archives dépassent

en complexité le cadre de cet essai¹³⁷. Plusieurs membres de cette génération espèrent y acquérir un capital symbolique et monétaire en contrepartie du geste qu'ils posent sous le couvert de la générosité. Or, ce legs fait s'entrecroiser plusieurs formations discursives et ne se réduit donc pas aux modalités d'une simple transaction économique.

À l'instar de la traduction d'un texte, le passage des fonds d'une adresse vers l'autre (nous réitérons ici la double acception de ce mot) produit simultanément un gain et une perte de signification.

Nancy Ruth Bartlett postule ainsi que l'accès aux archives une fois leur période d'activité échue repose sur les interventions d'un ensemble de médiateurs. Les archivistes, historiens de l'art, et souvent l'artiste lui-même ou ses proches (pairs, amis, famille, exécuteurs testamentaires) en gèrent la pérennité, balisant (quelquefois de manière contraignante) leur usage. Selon Bartlett, un nombre peu suffisant d'utilisateurs des archives remettent en question ce cadre idéologique¹³⁸. La tension entre hermétisme et transparence communicationnelle au sein des avant-gardes du XX^e siècle complexifie pourtant cette logique de l'accessibilité. Les artistes s'engagent désormais de leur vivant dans un processus de médiation des corpus qu'ils ont accumulés. Ils en façonnent la réception et les considèrent parfois comme des œuvres à part entière. Nous analyserons brièvement ici la façon dont quelques gestes, posés en amont de la domiciliation des fonds d'archives, peuvent infléchir l'interprétation des documents. Loin de se présenter comme des cas de figure, les exemples suivants sont solidaires des stratégies déployées dans les pratiques respectives des groupes d'artistes.

En 1973, Martin Bartlett, Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov, Glenn Lewis, Kate Craig, Eric Metcalfe, Mo Van Nostrand et Henry Greenshow acquièrent le 303 East Avenue, à Vancouver, qui devient à la fois un lieu de résidence et le centre autogéré Western Front Lodge (plus tard Western Front Society). Cette même année, Robert Filliou visite la ville de la côte ouest pour rencontrer certains artistes avec lesquels il correspond. Lors d'une discussion que filme Paul Wong dans l'immeuble tout juste investi par ses nouveaux copropriétaires, des acteurs clefs commentent un album de photographies des performances et événements de l'Intermedia Society prises par Michael De Courcy¹³⁹. La caméra de Wong capte ces clichés en gros plan. Pour éviter les digressions, Filliou suggère que les interventions de chacun des participants se cantonnent aux recensions factuelles du contenu des documents. Le vieillissement de la bande brouille désormais ces plans rapprochés et les témoignages dits hors champ viennent légender des spectres photographiques du passé à la limite de la lisibilité. Les artistes utilisent principalement la

¹³⁵ Vincent Trasov et Michael Morris s'installent ensuite à Berlin en 1981.

¹³⁶ On remet ainsi en vente des exemplaires de publications d'artistes afin que celles-ci prennent graduellement de la valeur. De plus, dans les années 1980, la vidéo change de statut. D'abord investi par les activistes et les artistes en tant qu'outil de dissémination d'information, le médium est consacré comme une forme d'art à part entière avec ses propres festivals et distributeurs.

¹³⁷ Précisons que cette analyse se cantonne aux corpus consultés lors des recherches menées pour réaliser les trois volets de *Protocoles documentaires* dont le contenu fait l'objet d'un échantillonnage important dans le présent ouvrage. Par ailleurs, d'autres fonds d'archives de centres autogérés créés entre 1967 et 1975 se trouvent désormais au sein de collections de musées ou d'universités canadiennes : le fonds Powerhouse/La Centrale; le fonds Optica (Archives de l'Université Concordia); le fonds de la Kensington Arts Association (plus tard, Centre for Experimental Art and Communication) (York University Archives and Special Collections), entre autres.

¹³⁸ Voir : Nancy Ruth Bartlett, « Past Imperfect (*l'imparfait*) : Mediating Meaning in Archives of Art », dans *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, sous la dir. de Francis X. Blouin Jr. et William G. Rosenberg, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 2006, p. 121-133.

¹³⁹ *Intermedia History*/Glenn Lewis; caméra : Paul Wong, 1973. Fonds Western Front Society.

vidéo afin de documenter leurs modes de vie alternatifs et des pratiques éphémères, mais la caméra agit ici plutôt pour susciter la prise de parole et faciliter le passage d'individus d'une institution (Intermedia) à l'autre (Western Front Lodge).

Un parallélisme s'établit également entre les outils conçus dans l'objectif de faire circuler l'information (fiches, listes, etc.) au sein du contre-public de pairs formé par les artistes et les méthodes de description des documents lorsqu'ils transitent vers le statut d'archives. Dans le numéro inaugural de *FILE*, Morris et Trasov publient une fiche portant l'intitulé « archives index card », munie d'un espace vierge sur lequel les correspondants peuvent coller leur sceau (« artists proof ») et formuler une requête d'images. Comme l'indique cette fiche, le projet de constituer un corpus émerge lors de la tentative d'étendre exponentiellement la portée du réseau. Image Bank assimile alors les envois reçus à un capital symbolique pouvant être réinvesti¹⁴⁰. Or, depuis la fin des années 1960, Trasov et Morris conservent aussi une partie de la correspondance de leurs pairs et assemblent une collection de publications sur les mouvements d'avant-garde après 1945.

En s'installant dans l'immeuble du Western Front Lodge, ils poursuivent ces activités comme stratégie artistique en soi. Par ailleurs, dès 1974, Trasov et Morris tentent d'inventorier le contenu de leur fonds d'archives au moyen de fiches semblables à celles qu'ils ont conçues pour recueillir les requêtes. Lors de la même période, certains collègues (surtout Kate Craig) se mettent à documenter avec une caméra Portapak les performances, lectures de poésie et autres événements qu'ils organisent. Les fiches d'Image Bank sont utilisées afin de cataloguer ces documents formant désormais la mémoire audiovisuelle de la structure autogérée (pour bien distinguer le centre et le collectif, le nom « Image Bank » est biffé au crayon-feutre). Les retombées des projets d'Image Bank et les résidus de transactions quotidiennes de ses deux membres côtoient d'abord les archives de la Western Front Society. Après une entreprise laborieuse de catalogage durant une résidence de Morris et Trasov au Banff Center for the Arts en 1990, ceux-ci déposent leur corpus à la Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery (alors la Fine Arts Gallery, Université de la Colombie-Britannique, Vancouver)¹⁴¹. En 2007, la bibliothèque des collections spéciales et livres rares de l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique acquiert par legs le fonds de la Western Front Society.

Le fonds Iain Baxter fait, quant à lui, figure d'exception au sein d'une typologie des archives d'artistes. Celui-ci renferme des retombées d'œuvres conceptuelles de Baxter, ainsi que de ses activités de

¹⁴⁰ Dans l'esprit du travail de Ray Johnson, le collectif recycle fréquemment certaines lettres qu'il modifie et réachemine à leurs destinataires.

¹⁴¹ Or, le corpus reste toujours la propriété des artistes. Voir Michael Morris et Vincent Trasov, *Morris/Trasov Archive*, publié à compte d'auteurs, Berlin, 1990.

pédagogue. Toutefois, ces documents côtoient ceux de N.E. Thing Co. et cette porosité brouille ici plusieurs registres de traces. Les dossiers afférents à la compagnie contiennent eux-mêmes une matière documentaire hétérogène. Hormis la correspondance entre les Baxter et divers acteurs du monde de l'art, les transactions de N.E. Thing Co. avec certains fonctionnaires provinciaux ou municipaux génèrent des actes notariés, des comptes-rendus de réunions, etc.

Dans le cadre d'une exposition de la Kunsthalle Basel consacrée à l'art canadien (organisée par le commissaire Jean-Christophe Ammann), Iain et Ingrid Baxter produisent un ouvrage afin de colliger les faits saillants de la trajectoire de N.E. Thing Co. depuis sa fondation¹⁴². Au sein de cette publication proche du catalogue raisonné, mais présentée comme une œuvre des artistes, le foisonnement d'activités de la compagnie est assujéti à la logique des feuillets d'information reproduits pleine page. Ceux-ci font s'enchaîner les reliques de micro-événements de la vie quotidienne des Baxter et les retombées documentaires de propositions conceptuelles réalisées ou non¹⁴³. Le couple ajoute souvent des légendes descriptives dans la case du feuillet réservé à cet effet pour fournir les bases d'un récit cumulatif sur leur parcours en tant que collectif et famille nucléaire. La séquence chronologique prend fin en 1977, avant qu'ils ne divorcent l'année suivante et décident du même coup de dissoudre N.E. Thing Co. Cette séparation produit également une césure au sein de la structure du corpus assemblé par le couple, car Iain Baxter absorbe les archives de la compagnie, laissant dans une zone grise la part que possède sa coprésidente, Ingrid Baxter. En 1992, Iain Baxter tente de circonscrire une fois de plus les composantes matérielles de l'infrastructure communicationnelle qu'il a forgée. Art Metropole organise une exposition réunissant les cartes de visite, papier de correspondance, macarons, etc., mis en circulation par le collectif sous forme de tirages à édition limitée. Comme le livre de 1977, la publication issue de ce projet – sous la direction de Baxter – se rapproche de l'entreprise d'un catalogue raisonné¹⁴⁴.

Avant le legs du fonds au Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, Baxter classe son contenu selon une séquence chronologique afin de faciliter la conception d'un premier instrument de recherche. Corollairement, la plupart des dossiers ne se rapportent plus à un projet. Des documents d'une année d'activité de l'artiste s'y retrouvent pêle-mêle (l'année charnière 1969 comporte à elle seule quatre chemises).

Baxter n'impose pas de restriction sur la reproduction et la dissémination de la part documentaire de son travail, comme en témoignent

¹⁴² *Kanadische Kunstler*, Bâle, Kunsthalle Basel, 1977.

¹⁴³ Voir : *The N.E. Thing Co. Ltd Book*, Vancouver; Bâle, N.E. Thing Co., Kunsthalle Basel, 1978.

¹⁴⁴ Iain Baxter, *Media Works: N.E. Thing Co. LTD.*, Toronto, Art Metropole, 1992.

des mentions dans *The N.E. Thing Co. Book* et dans *Media Works*, conférant d'une façon tacite la permission aux lecteurs d'en faire usage. De cette façon, il rend manifeste la dimension éthique d'une transmission subséquente de son corpus selon l'esprit démocratique de sa pratique des années 1960 et 1970.

Parmi l'ensemble des gestes de médiation des fonds d'archives en amont de leur domiciliation, la constitution d'un inventaire préliminaire arrime des faits de la trajectoire biographique d'une collectivité ou d'un individu à une masse documentaire éparse. Bien qu'utilisés par les chercheurs pendant un certain temps, ces « paratextes » sont ensuite atomisés en données modulables au sein des champs d'un catalogue informatisé. Ils existent ainsi sur le plan discursif dans l'interstice entre la première demeure des archives et l'institution qui les accueille.

Michael Morris et Vincent Trasov cataloguent eux-mêmes leurs documents auxquels ils attribuent des numéros d'accession. General Idea choisit cependant de déléguer cette tâche à une proche collaboratrice, Fern Bayer, historienne de l'art et spécialiste de leur travail¹⁴⁵. Forgeant une méthode *ad hoc*, celle-ci ne respecte pas les normes de description des archives dont la logique de condensation permet habituellement de synthétiser l'information du général au particulier¹⁴⁶. Le niveau de détail de cet inventaire préliminaire du fonds General Idea superpose ainsi souvent la carte à l'échelle du territoire, ajoutant même quelquefois des récits complémentaires. Hormis les exigences institutionnelles de connaître le contenu de ce corpus pour en déterminer la valeur marchande et patrimoniale, cette prolifération narrative marque la présence de l'archiviste comme lecteur et scripteur plutôt que médiateur neutre.

Contrairement à Image Bank, General Idea définit l'ensemble de ses projets publiés – dont certains circulent d'abord au sein du réseau de correspondance – comme des multiples. Ces tirages à édition limitée seront plus tard réunis sous forme de catalogue raisonné¹⁴⁷.

Dans une demande de subvention déposée au Conseil des Arts de l'Ontario en avril 1974 pour disposer des fonds de démarrage afin d'exploiter Art Metropole, le collectif manifeste la volonté de poursuivre son entreprise de collecte de publications, de bandes vidéo et autres retombées de pratiques conceptuelles, jusqu'en 1984. L'année représente une date butoir au-delà de laquelle « la collection sera conservée de façon permanente dans un lieu désigné¹⁴⁸ ». Comme nous l'avons souligné antérieurement, cette date est aussi investie

d'une valeur symbolique en convoquant une balise temporelle commune à plusieurs membres du réseau de correspondance.

La lecture chronologique des documents du fonds d'archives de General Idea étaye l'hypothèse que le collectif n'entretient pas de rapports antagonistes avec les musées. Deux jours après l'ouverture du centre autogéré le 26 octobre, le gestionnaire Robert Handforth répond à une requête d'information sur Art Metropole envoyée par la bibliothécaire J. Hunter du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada. Il lui suggère alors de se procurer l'échantillon de publications qu'inventorie le premier catalogue de l'organisation¹⁴⁹. En 1999, le mécène Jay A. Smith acquiert la collection Art Metropole d'AA Bronson et l'offre au musée. Le fonds General Idea est, quant à lui, prêté pour une durée indéterminée par Bronson à cette même institution.

En guise d'introduction au catalogue accompagnant une exposition inaugurale de la collection intitulée *Top 100* (2006), Smith décrit le corpus comme un « musée dans le musée¹⁵⁰ ». Les commissaires Kitty Scott et Jonathan Shaughnessy concluent qu'il « est dans l'ordre des choses qu'elle ait trouvé un abri permanent au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada¹⁵¹ ». Leur mise en récit assimile sa domiciliation à une étape logique : l'institution représente la dernière adresse des documents et, corollairement, le lieu où ils seront désormais interprétés.

CONTRATS INTERGÉNÉRATIONNELS

Dans une communication prononcée en 1999, Ken Lum rend compte d'une époque faste, vers le milieu des années 1980, où les artistes canadiens jouissaient de la pleine mesure du « complexe subventionnaire »¹⁵². Ils pouvaient alors recevoir des subsides afin de produire des œuvres et les exposer d'un centre autogéré à l'autre, grâce à des bourses de voyage. Par la suite, ils les soumettaient au comité d'acquisition de la banque d'œuvres du Conseil des Arts du Canada dont les membres (également des pairs) représentaient toutes les régions du Canada. Moyennant le remboursement des sommes perçues et quelques frais administratifs, les artistes avaient également la possibilité de récupérer leurs productions.

Bien que Lum ne le mentionne pas dans son article, le legs des fonds d'archives d'artistes de la génération voyant naître les structures autogérées ferme, pour ainsi dire, la boucle. Seconde incorporation, ce « changement d'adresse » scelle symboliquement le contrat que les artistes signent avec l'État au début des années 1970.

¹⁴⁵ Fern Bayer a co-organisé leur rétrospective au Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario et co-dirigé le catalogue raisonné de leurs multiples.

¹⁴⁶ Voir : *Règles pour la description des documents d'archives*, Ottawa, Conseil canadien des archives, 2007, consulté le 9 octobre 2009 à [http://www.cdnouncilarchives.ca/f-public_free.html].

¹⁴⁷ *General Idea Editions 1967-1995*, sous la dir. de Barbara Fischer, Toronto, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, 2003.

¹⁴⁸ Demande de subvention au Conseil des Arts de l'Ontario/Robert Handforth (Art Metropole), 30 avril 1974. Fonds Art Metropole, Bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa, série 5, boîte 2, dossier intitulé « Ontario Arts Council (1974-1976) ».

¹⁴⁹ Lettre à J. Hunter (bibliothécaire de la Galerie nationale du Canada)/Robert Handforth (Art Metropole), 28 octobre 1974. Dossier documentaire Art Metropole, Bibliothèque et archives, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁵⁰ *Art Metropole. Le top 100*, sous la dir. de Kitty Scott et Jonathan Shaughnessy, Ottawa, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, 2006, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ Kitty Scott, Jonathan Shaughnessy, « Une introduction à la collection Art Metropole », *ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁵² Ken Lum, « Canadian Cultural Policy: A Metaphysical Problem », communication prononcée à Wrocław, Pologne, en juin 1999, disponible sur le site Web de la galerie Apexart, New York, consulté le 1^{er} octobre 2009, à [http://www.apexart.org/conference/lum.htm].

Lum retient surtout de ce « scénario du berceau au cercueil » qu'une volonté d'autodétermination – d'abord légitime – s'est bureaucratisée jusqu'à absorber toutes les fonctions imparties aux experts (critiques, historiens) évaluant la légitimité des œuvres. L'une de ses conséquences sera, d'après lui, de brimer l'écriture de l'histoire en dévaluant des points de vue extérieurs à ceux des artistes.

Par contraste, Clive Robertson fait état du privilège que confèrent certains historiens aux critiques de l'échec des utopies des années 1960 et 1970. Lorsqu'ils décrivent la faillite du conceptualisme « colonisé par ses tendances bureaucratiques », ceux-ci expriment également des réserves quant au projet de muter l'art du statut de marchandise vers l'offre de services¹⁵³. Selon Robertson, ce dénigrement de l'administration procède d'un modernisme résiduel où l'on persiste à tracer une ligne franche entre les partis pris esthétiques et l'activisme politique. En créant des organisations selon le modèle de l'autogestion, les artistes canadiens tenteront de mettre à mal les idées reçues sur leurs capacités d'administrer des institutions – et donc d'investir un champ qui restait la chasse gardée d'une élite culturelle.

Le moment de mise à l'essai du paradigme autogestionnaire prépare l'infrastructure dans laquelle ils évolueront lors des décennies suivantes et où l'aspiration à l'autonomie s'accompagnera d'une dépendance toujours plus grande aux bailleurs de fonds. En revanche, l'économie du don représente encore aujourd'hui le mode privilégié pour pallier l'insuffisance des ressources financières.

Se sentant exclus de la méritocratie du « complexe subventionnaire » et tentant de contourner la bureaucratie, plusieurs jeunes artistes créent des structures de diffusion (galeries, publications) selon une forme souple, analogue à celle des premiers centres autogérés. La façon dont ils trafiquent des fichiers sur les plateformes participatives du Web rappelle également le détournement du système de la poste, ainsi que l'utilisation du réseau câblé par leurs aînés pour se constituer un contre-public de pairs.

Comme l'indiquent Ève Chiapello et Luc Boltanski, dans les années 1990, les entreprises du secteur tertiaire incorporent des pans entiers de la « critique artiste » des soulèvements de Mai 68 afin de mettre à jour des modèles de gestion du personnel hérités de la période industrielle¹⁵⁴. En attribuant aux employés une certaine autodétermination dans la définition des tâches, elles absorbent le projet d'émancipation des années 1960 et neutralisent ainsi leurs adversaires. Les auteurs postulent que cette subjectivité artistique échappant

¹⁵³ Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administration of Art and Culture*, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Voir : Ève Chiapello et Luc Boltanski, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 1999.

traditionnellement à la loi de l'offre et de la demande devient désormais une plus-value au sein d'un système d'échange de la connaissance comme marchandise. Ils négligent cependant d'aborder la façon dont les artistes proposent eux-mêmes des représentations plus complexes du travail au moment où se dessinent les principes de ce capitalisme cognitif. En s'identifiant à la figure du fournisseur de services, ceux-ci étendent alors la portée sociale de leur pratique et s'octroient une marge de manœuvre dans la périphérie du champ de l'art. Il semble que ce constat s'applique particulièrement au Canada, où les agences gouvernementales soutenant la culture s'adaptent à cette rupture épistémologique. Ainsi, lorsque les artistes sont interpellés par les fonctionnaires du Programme des initiatives locales conçu pour contrer le chômage, ils façonnent des catégories professionnelles radicalement éloignées de l'image que la société entretient à leur égard. Au lieu d'offrir des expériences esthétiques, ils se plient au mandat du programme et échafaudent des systèmes idoines afin de cartographier les flux d'information transitant entre plusieurs communautés hors de leurs cercles de pairs. En ce sens, cet investissement du secteur tertiaire représente une forme de travail immatériel avant la lettre.

Cependant, il faut se garder de produire rapidement des filiations d'une période à l'autre sans y neutraliser d'abord une pulsion d'appréhender des stratégies de pratiques radicales des années 1960 et 1970 au plan structurel plutôt qu'historique.

Afin que les retombées de ce moment se transmettent d'une façon complexe et qu'elles aient un effet sur le présent, l'accès aux témoignages des artistes, ainsi qu'à leurs archives, est nécessaire. Soumis aux pressions de trouver un lieu adéquat pour pérenniser leurs fonds, ceux-ci ne mesurent pas toujours les conséquences d'une domiciliation de ces corpus au sein d'institutions embrassant la privatisation du patrimoine. Le nœud de contraintes auquel se butent les chercheurs (et quelquefois les artistes) lorsqu'ils tentent de faire circuler le contenu de ces fonds montre dans quelle mesure l'écriture de l'histoire nécessite un investissement économique considérable.

Le concept de « contrat intergénérationnel » désigne une relation de co-dépendance en vertu de laquelle une génération doit honorer une dette à ses aînés, car ceux-ci ont fourni un bien commun dont elle profite inconsciemment. Il balise également les responsabilités qui incombent aux membres de cette génération de transmettre ce bien à la suivante. Jan Verwoert détourne son acception (issue des sciences sociales) pour évoquer l'économie complexe de la communication intergénérationnelle dans le périmètre du champ artistique¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵⁵ Jan Verwoert, « On Future Histories: And the Generational Contract with the No Longer and Not Yet Living And the Pan-Demonium of Irreverent Styles of Nostalgia », dans *Questioning History: Imagining the Past in Contemporary Art*, Rotterdam, NAI, 2008, p. 90-99.

L'imprécision sémantique de ce concept (simultanément entente tacite et obligation) limite pourtant sa portée heuristique. Les engagements que prennent ces groupes d'âge produisent souvent un capital culturel chiffrable au lieu d'un partage d'expériences et de connaissances. Un jeune artiste peut ainsi faire découvrir le travail d'un aîné tombé dans l'oubli à des commissaires, galeristes, critiques, en le citant dans ses œuvres¹⁵⁶. Tous les partis y gagnent au change, car la pratique de l'un est cautionnée et celle de l'autre trouve sa pertinence. Contournant ce mode, certains choisissent plutôt de s'effacer jusqu'à un certain point afin d'amortir les effets du marché de l'art sur la transmission d'un matériau historique.

James Hoff et Miriam Katzeff ont fondé le collectif Primary Information en 2006, dans le but de remettre en circulation des documents publiés principalement lors des années 1960 et 1970 aux États-Unis. Leur nom évoque le postulat de Seth Siegelaub selon lequel l'expérience de certaines œuvres conceptuelles peut se réduire à un véhicule imprimé court-circuitant une médiation *secondaire* dans les revues d'art, voire au sein d'une exposition. Hoff et Katzeff mettent à jour le concept de Siegelaub, qui définit cette fois l'accessibilité de ces publications sous forme de fac-similés au coût raisonnable ou de fichiers téléchargeables depuis leur site Web¹⁵⁷. Bien que l'échantillon qu'ils constituent soit limité, le geste de disséminer des documents vendus à fort prix ou relégués aux réserves des musées crée l'amorce d'une filiation réelle entre leurs préoccupations esthétiques ou politiques et celles des artistes de la génération précédente.

Les stratégies déployées dans *Protocoles documentaires* s'énoncent d'après un programme analogue. En revanche, la question d'un changement de statut des archives une fois qu'elles sont publiées se pose ici de façon plus directe. Acheminés à un nombre restreint d'individus pour se trouver ensuite domiciliés au sein de collections d'institutions conservant le patrimoine, les documents rassemblés dans l'échantillon suivant seront désormais interprétés par une autre communauté de lecteurs. Cet état de fait devient d'autant plus prégnant avec certains d'entre eux, car leur dissémination s'est d'abord cantonnée au périmètre d'un contre-public (les listes d'Image Bank et de Michael Goldberg à titre d'exemples).

Il faut donc distinguer ces différents modes d'adresse des documents en identifiant avec précision l'ensemble des acteurs qu'ils interpellent lors des années 1960 et 1970 ainsi que les modalités de leur médiation ultérieure. Les cahiers de l'échantillon consacrés à chacun des groupes d'artistes respectent une séquence chronologique. Par

ailleurs, leur contenu peut se décliner conceptuellement selon un axe synchronique et révéler alors l'étendue des gestes suscités par des contraintes d'écriture administrative ou des situations de communication partagées. Les artistes ajoutent également une dimension réflexive à ce nouveau rôle de travailleurs culturels qu'ils s'octroient en déplaçant certaines fonctions performatives de la gestion courante de structures autogérées au sein de leur pratique.

L'interprétation de ces archives demande d'établir des méthodologies *ad hoc* où cette discursivité complexe infléchit la mise en récit historique. La sélection des pièces de l'échantillon dérive avant tout de recherches que nous avons entreprises afin d'organiser les volets I et II de *Protocoles documentaires*. Or il n'aurait pas été possible de produire un tel ouvrage en faisant l'économie d'autres points de vue. La plupart des auteurs choisis pour rédiger des études de cas disposaient au préalable d'une connaissance approfondie des projets et enjeux théoriques sur lesquels ils se pencheraient. Bien que plusieurs d'entre eux aient consulté les fonds, ils ont eu accès à des photocopies d'une portion pertinente de ces corpus pour amorcer l'écriture de leurs articles. Nous avons énoncé la contrainte qu'ils abordent ces sources premières comme objets de leurs analyses plutôt qu'un matériau étayant une thèse ou une fiction rétrospective. Sans mettre au premier plan la question des archives à proprement parler, leurs textes investissent des phénomènes et événements dont la transmission repose désormais sur ces retombées documentaires.

Malgré sa solidarité avec l'appareil critique constitué par l'ensemble de cet ouvrage, l'échantillon de documents doit être appréhendé indépendamment des études de cas. Le lecteur peut cependant établir des liens entre ces interprétations et les pièces reproduites ou transcrites. En revanche, l'enchaînement de celles-ci forme un texte dont les articulations se dessinent d'un cahier à l'autre et qui leur confère une certaine autonomie.

156 Sur la dimension économique du phénomène de la référence dans l'art contemporain, voir *Texte Zur Kunst*, n° 71 (septembre 2008). Titre du numéro : « Artists' Artists ».

157 Primary Information travaille de concert avec les artistes sans jamais contourner la question de la propriété intellectuelle. Voir dans le présent ouvrage, Primary Information, « That Was Then ... That is Now: Redistributing the Art Workers Coalition ». D'autres collectifs diffusent de façon analogue des publications d'artistes des années 1960 et 1970. En 2003, Continuous Project, formé de Bettina Funcke, Wade Guyton, Joseph Logan et Seth Price, fait ainsi circuler le premier numéro de la revue *Avalanche* sous forme de photocopies vendues par la galerie Maccarone (New York) au prix fixé lors de sa publication (1970).

**UN MONUMENT
AU « RÉSEAU
ÉTERNEL »**

**Ou la rencontre inopinée d'un artiste et
d'un administrateur dans un institut national
d'information scientifique et technique**

ANNE
BÉNICHOU

« Ottawa est une ville pleine de surprises ! » me répondit Glenn Lewis en riant, alors que je m'étonnais qu'il soit parvenu à réaliser en 1974 le *Great Wall of 1984*, œuvre collective empreinte de l'esprit contestataire de la contre-culture, dans le cadre très officiel d'une commande d'art public du ministère des Travaux publics pour la bibliothèque du Conseil national de recherches du Canada (CNRC), à Ottawa. Situé au cœur du complexe scientifique qui a été inauguré en 1973, au sud d'Ottawa, l'Institut canadien de l'information scientifique et technique (ICIST), anciennement appelé Bibliothèque nationale des sciences, abrite l'une des manifestations les plus imposantes des réseaux canadiens et internationaux d'art par correspondance¹.

Au rez-de-chaussée de cette très sérieuse institution, Robert Filliou a établi quelque 752 pouces carrés de territoire de sa République géniale, Kate Craig, dite Lady Brute, a déposé l'un des dessins de tête de lapin que Ray Johnson et la Buddha University lui ont dédié, son compagnon Mr. Brute (Eric Metcalfe) a entreposé son saxophone, le collectif Les petits bonbons célèbre le 1 000 011^e anniversaire de l'art, etc. La liste est longue puisque le *Great Wall* est une murale constituée de 365 boîtes de plexiglas contenant des objets et des imprimés que des artistes et des collectifs des réseaux d'art par correspondance ont envoyés par la poste à la demande de Lewis.

L'œuvre d'art que composent ces artefacts hétéroclites est à plusieurs égards paradoxale. D'une part, l'esprit de contre-culture qui l'anime jure avec le contexte très officiel et institutionnel dans lequel elle a été créée. On se demande comment Lewis est parvenu à faire valider un tel projet dans le cadre d'une commande gouvernementale d'intégration de l'art à l'architecture. On s'interroge également sur ses motivations et celles des participants à s'inscrire dans une conjoncture si institutionnelle. D'autre part, la nature « matérialisée » et la forme « monumentalisée » du *Great Wall* surprennent dans le contexte de l'art par correspondance, puisque ces artistes, à l'instar de leurs collègues de l'art conceptuel, se détournent de la production d'objets au profit de la mise en circulation d'idées et d'informations. Leurs activités ont généré des publications et des fonds d'archives. La réalisation d'une œuvre prenant la forme d'un objet sculptural pérenne est rarissime chez eux et peut paraître opposée à l'esprit qui animait ces communautés d'artistes, et aux esthétiques de l'éphémère qu'ils ont développées.

Ces contradictions se résorbent lorsque l'on saisit la singularité des réseaux d'artistes au Canada, en l'occurrence leur dimension très pragmatique. Tout en critiquant et en parodiant le milieu de l'art,

ses esthétiques, ses valeurs, ses pratiques et ses institutions, ces communautés d'artistes ont conçu et mis en œuvre un nouveau paysage institutionnel qui est encore le nôtre aujourd'hui : les centres d'artistes autogérés, alors appelés les galeries parallèles.

Le « réseau éternel »² décentralisé, processus d'interaction continue entre les artistes, que Robert Filliou avait imaginé avec George Brecht en 1968 au moment de la fermeture de la Cédille qui sourit, « non-boutique » dédiée à la « Création permanente », se concrétisait en véritables institutions au Canada. Filliou l'avait d'ailleurs bien saisi en 1973, lors de sa première visite des centres d'artistes canadiens qui venaient tout juste d'être créés. Il reconnut d'emblée l'importance de son expérience canadienne : « There was no doubt that at that time, really I think the impetus for the actual creation of the Eternal Network has come from these people in Canada... »³ Les acteurs canadiens, quant à eux, considérèrent que Filliou et Ray Johnson avaient contribué sur le plan des idées au réseau qui se développait par le truchement des institutions au Canada : « ... Both Filliou and Johnson contributed a spirit and a style to an activity and an era which gave the network a legitimacy that otherwise could have been lost in the bureaucracy of its own making. »⁴

C'est au regard de cette « institutionnalisation » du réseau éternel qui s'opère au début des années soixante-dix que *The Great Wall* prend toute sa signification et qu'il semble possible de dépasser les paradoxes qui y sont rattachés. Je tenterai de montrer que la proposition de Lewis marque la transition entre deux moments de la constitution du champ de l'art contemporain au Canada. Le premier est dominé par un modèle expérimental, contestataire, imbibé de l'esprit de la contre-culture, avec des organisations souples, éphémères, qui se font et se défont au gré des affinités personnelles et des projets à réaliser, qui miment les organisations institutionnelles dans un esprit ludique et parodique, tout en recevant le soutien de plusieurs organismes officiels. Le deuxième procède d'une institutionnalisation de ces formes organisationnelles souples en centres d'artistes autogérés et regroupés en réseaux national puis provinciaux, et s'est accompagné d'un désengagement de certaines institutions officielles et de l'insuffisance du soutien de celles qui ont maintenu leur allégeance. Cette mutation a permis une extension des champs de compétences des artistes, mais elle s'est accompagnée d'une charge administrative très lourde que les créateurs devaient dès lors assumer. La figure de l'artiste administrateur et gestionnaire se consolida. S'instaura également une perméabilité étonnante entre les pratiques institutionnelles et artistiques.

¹ J'utilise ici l'expression « art par correspondance » par commodité. Cette appellation qualifie le travail d'artistes qui s'attachaient à créer des outils et des réseaux de communication débordant le seul système postal. De plus, plusieurs artistes qui ont participé au *Great Wall of 1984* menaient une pratique artistique parallèle à celle du réseau. D'autres n'y ont été associés que ponctuellement.

² Bien que Robert Filliou n'utilisait l'expression « eternal network » qu'en anglais, j'emploie tout de même la traduction française « réseau éternel ».

³ Robert Filliou, « The Propositions and Principles of Robert Filliou », transcript from the video *Porta-filliou*, dans Robert Filliou. *From Political to Poetical Economy*, Vancouver, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, p. 78.

⁴ Michael Morris et Vincent Trasov, « Letter from Berlin », dans Robert Filliou. *From Political to Poetical Economy*, op.cit., p. 73.

UNE « HISTOIRE CHUCHOTÉE DE L'ART » PAR CORRESPONDANCE

Lewis réalisa *The Great Wall* dans le cadre de la New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, réseau informel d'artistes qu'il créa à Vancouver en 1970, auquel chacun pouvait se joindre à son gré. Le nom est dérivé de la New York Correspondence School de Ray Johnson. Lewis coupla New York à Vancouver, afin de souligner l'idée de décentralisation essentielle à la notion de « réseau éternel ». Le mot « sponge » est une allusion à l'« Histoire chuchotée de l'art » de Filliou selon laquelle le premier geste artistique de l'histoire de l'humanité serait celui d'un homme qui s'empara d'une éponge et la plongea dans un seau d'eau, un 17 janvier, il y a un million d'années⁵. Cette référence souligne le désir d'extension presque illimitée de la notion d'œuvre d'art. Les activités des membres de la New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver étaient axées sur la performance et les envois postaux⁶.

La New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver ne constitue toutefois pas une entité indépendante. Les réseaux qui se sont développés entre 1969 et 1974 se confondent, se chevauchent, fusionnent parce que leurs membres souhaitaient créer une communauté internationale d'artistes dans laquelle la dissémination et le partage des idées étaient le moteur principal. Comme le rappelle AA Bronson, il s'agissait de créer un milieu de l'art décentralisé, basé sur l'image d'un virus, une épidémie parallèle au système de l'art en place⁷. Aussi, les listes de membres, les projets, les thèmes, les images sont repris d'un réseau à l'autre.

Étroitement intriqués les uns aux autres, tous ces réseaux échangeaient leurs listes. Dès 1969, Morris acquit celle des membres de la New York Correspondence School et l'utilisa pour Image Bank. En 1971, elle fut augmentée de plusieurs listes importantes, dont celle de l'artiste Ken Friedman, fondateur de Fluxus West, qui s'était installé à Vancouver. Puis General Idea la reprit pour l'annuaire des artistes de *File*. Il semble que Lewis utilisa cette même liste pour les projets de la New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver et, par conséquent, pour le *Great Wall*.

Le *Great Wall of 1984* est manifeste de ce phénomène de fusion. D'une part, les artistes des principaux réseaux de l'époque y ont participé. D'autre part, on y trouve des références aux projets marquants qui s'y développaient, au cours des premières années de la décennie. Le titre de l'œuvre et sa référence au célèbre roman de George Orwell, *1984*, inscrivent d'emblée le *Great Wall* dans la lignée du projet

qu'Image Bank mena deux années auparavant. En 1972, le collectif lança une requête d'images autour du thème de 1984, selon la consigne suivante : « Inventors of today are planning now for tomorrow! Look into the future! Please send your image of 1984 to Image Bank. » La référence à Orwell oriente le projet vers les thèmes du totalitarisme, des technologies de la communication, de la science-fiction. Plusieurs participants dont General Idea envoyèrent des images des années cinquante et soixante tirées des médias, entre autres des magazines *Life*, *Time* et *Fortune*, qui mettaient en évidence les conceptions collectives du futur dans la société de l'après-Seconde Guerre mondiale : la conquête de l'espace, le bonheur promis par la société de consommation, la culture populaire et les avancées technologiques. Dans un entretien consacré à Western Front au cours de l'été 1973, la revue *Avalanche* présentait le projet d'Image Bank comme une recherche préliminaire au *Great Wall*⁸.

D'autres projets se développaient au même moment autour du thème de 1984. Gary Lee Nova photographia toutes les maisons de la ville de Vancouver portant le numéro 1984. En 1972, le collectif Ant Farm réalisa une *Time Capsule* dont le contenu ne devait être révélé qu'en 1984⁹. De nombreux projets de General Idea eurent pour horizon l'année 1984. Durant sept ans, le collectif organisa des répétitions en vue du concours de beauté *The 1984 Miss General Idea Beauty Pageant* et exploita l'idée de ruines du futur avec le Pavillon de Miss General Idea dont les vestiges dataient de 1984.

Lewis travailla le thème d'une façon très ouverte. Dans l'invitation qu'il adresse aux membres de la New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, il joue sur la notion de temps calendaire : le nombre de boîtes correspond au nombre de jours d'une année ; et il attribue à chacune d'entre elles le numéro d'une année comprise entre 1620 et 1984. Les numéros n'apparaissent toutefois pas sur les boîtes, sauf si les artistes les ont intégrés à leur intervention. Le hasard faisant bien les choses, 1620 est l'année où le Mayflower accosta à Plymouth¹⁰ ! La proposition de Lewis reprend la notion de vestiges de l'avenir des projets d'Image Bank, d'Ant Farm et de General Idea, puisque les artefacts déposés dans *The Great Wall* doivent y demeurer de façon permanente. De nombreux participants explorent cette idée. D'autres, dans la foulée du projet *1984* d'Image Bank, poursuivent leur réflexion sur les conceptions collectives de l'avenir. D'autres, plus rares, restent dans l'esprit orwellien de la contre-utopie, d'autant plus que Lewis intègre au titre de l'œuvre une référence à la Grande Muraille de Chine, au moment où le gouvernement de Pierre Elliott Trudeau renoue les relations diplomatiques avec la Chine.

5 Cette référence est explicitée dans E.E. Clair (pseudonyme de Lewis), *Mondo Artie Episode n°1777*, 28 mars 1973, Morris/Trasov Archive, Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 25.28, Box C. 14. Robert Filliou, « Une histoire chuchotée de l'art », dans *Robert Filliou. L'art est ce qui rend la vie plus intéressante que l'art*, Québec, Inter, 2003, p. 38-49.

6 Chaque semaine, coiffés d'un chapeau en forme de nageoire de requin, les membres se retrouvaient à la piscine publique de Vancouver, la Crystal Pool, aux heures de bain libre, pour des séances de natation synchronisée, les « Swimming events », clin d'œil aux films d'Esther Williams. Parmi les projets d'art par correspondance de la New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, on compte le *Better body works* au Nova Scotia College of Art à Halifax en mars 1972, l'exposition *Trajectoire 73* au Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, pour laquelle Lewis invita les membres du réseau à envoyer des « French letters, french kisses, french ticklers and french toast ».

7 AA Bronson, « L'humiliation du bureaucrate : les centres alternatifs – des musées des artistes », dans AA Bronson et P. Gale (sous la dir.), *Museums by Artists*, Toronto, Art Metropole, 1983, p. 31.

8 Willoughby Sharp, « Business as Usual at the Western Front », *Avalanche*, été-automne 1973, p. 34-39. Je remercie Vincent Bonin d'avoir attiré mon attention sur cet entretien.

9 Elle ne fut finalement ouverte qu'en 2000.

10 Le contenu de la boîte 1620 renvoie directement à cet événement fondateur de l'histoire des États-Unis.

Une cartographie des participants au *Great Wall*, constituée à la suite de la consultation des archives de Lewis, démontre l'internationalisation du réseau de la New York Corres Sponge Dance of Vancouver. La majorité des contributeurs sont canadiens et états-uniens, beaucoup d'entre eux établis sur la côte ouest¹¹. Plusieurs artistes européens ont participé : COUM, Blitzinformation, L'École d'art infantile, Robin Crozier, Robin Klassnik et Allen Jones d'Angleterre ; Robert Filliou et Ben Vautier de France ; Beke Laszlo de Hongrie ; William Louis Sørensen du Danemark ; Rich Vermeulen des Pays-Bas ; Jochen Gerz et Klaus Groh d'Allemagne de l'Ouest. D'Australie, on compte Rita Morris et Helicopter Art Coy. Se sont joints également Horacio Zabala d'Argentine, Pedro Friedeberg du Mexique, Gan Matsushita et Synzo Fujimito du Japon. Bien qu'approximative, cette cartographie révèle l'étendue du réseau. Si on la compare avec celle que dresse Michael Crane dans son essai « The Spread of Correspondence Art »¹², malgré des absents importants, elle reflète bien les extensions du réseau d'art par correspondance qui se sont opérées en 1973 en Australie, au Japon, en Europe de l'Est et en Amérique latine.

Le partage des idées, des thèmes, des personnages, par leur mise en circulation sur les réseaux afin que chacun puisse se les approprier et les transformer à sa guise, est également palpable dans le *Great Wall*. De nombreux participants ont déposé dans leur boîte des signes de cette communication et de ces échanges : listes de membres, adresses d'individus et de collectivités, correspondances, requêtes d'images. L'œuvre met également en évidence les modalités de reconnaissance de cette communauté d'artistes. Truffée de sous-entendus, de blagues, de langages codés, elle ne livre sa pleine signification qu'aux membres du réseau ou à ceux qui s'y sont intéressés. La capacité à décoder les messages en devient le signe d'appartenance. La murale et le système numérique invisible que Lewis a élaboré, calqué sur le temps calendaire, permettent une organisation spatiale des interventions qui n'est pas hiérarchique (chaque participant choisissant la date qui lui sied) et qui réitère le principe de la compilation qui sous-tend la plupart des projets d'art par correspondance. Le rôle du compilateur se réduit à rassembler toutes les propositions, sans exclusion et sans hiérarchie. Sa position se veut non autoritaire. L'usage d'un système organisateur « tout fait » semble garantir cet effacement.

Malgré l'apparent paradoxe que constitue le choix d'une œuvre monumentale et pérenne, le *Great Wall* incarne bien l'esprit et les valeurs qui animaient les réseaux d'art par correspondance. Il montre à quel point ces pratiques mettaient en pièces les conceptions traditionnelles de l'auteur rattachées aux beaux-arts, l'artiste comme individualité

créatrice. Toutes les formes alternatives d'auctorialité s'y côtoient : le pseudonymat, l'anonymat, le polyonymat, le collectif, l'effacement, l'incorporation. Le *Great Wall* connut d'ailleurs une réception très favorable au sein de ces communautés artistiques. Il fut primé meilleur œuvre d'art par correspondance lors de l'événement *Deccadance* qui s'est tenu à Hollywood le 17 janvier 1974¹³.

La représentation du réseau qui se dégage de la murale de Lewis et dans laquelle se mêlent indistinctement les anecdotes, les potins, les légendes, les mythes, les inventions, les sous-entendus, les canulars, les faits importants et les faits dérisoires, évoque cette « histoire chuchotée de l'art »¹⁴ que Filliou imagina en 1963, histoire sans noms, sans œuvres, sans événements, sans dates importantes, qui nous rappelle seulement que l'art est encore bien vivant.

UN « MUSÉE D'ARTISTES », AU MOMENT DE L'ESOUFFLEMENT DES RÉSEAUX

Dans *Networked Art*, Craig Saper¹⁵ assimile les artefacts mis en circulation sur les réseaux d'artistes à la notion de « recevable » de Roland Barthes, à cause de leur caractère délibérément non esthétique. Barthes distingue trois types d'entités textuelles : le lisible, le scriptible et le recevable :

Est lisible le texte que je ne pourrais réécrire (puis-je aujourd'hui écrire comme Balzac ?) ; est scriptible le texte que je lis avec peine, sauf à muter complètement mon régime de lecture. J'imagine maintenant (certains textes qu'on m'envoie me le suggèrent) qu'il y a peut-être une troisième entité textuelle : à côté du lisible et du scriptible, il y aurait quelque chose comme le recevable. Le recevable serait l'illisible qui accroche, le texte brûlant. Produit continûment hors de tout vraisemblable et dont la fonction – visiblement assumée par son scripteur – serait de contester la contrainte mercantile de l'écrit : ce texte, guidé, armé par une pensée de l'impubliable, appellerait la réponse suivante : je ne puis lire ni écrire ce que vous produisez, mais je le reçois, comme un feu, une drogue, une désorganisation énigmatique¹⁶.

À partir de cette notion, Saper forge le concept de « bureaucratie intime », parce que, selon lui, la circulation de ce matériel tisse entre l'émetteur et le récepteur une relation très personnelle, voire intime. Il s'agirait donc d'amener sur le terrain de l'intimité des transactions

¹¹ Il faut noter la quasi-absence des artistes québécois.

¹² Michael Crane, « The Spread of Correspondence Art », dans M. Crane et M. Stofflet (sous la dir.), *Correspondence Art. Source Book for the Network of International Postal Art Activity*, San Francisco, Contemporary Arts Press, 1984, p. 133-197.

¹³ Le plus imposant rassemblement des artistes des réseaux, *Deccadance* prenait la forme d'une remise de prix parodiant la cérémonie des Oscar.

¹⁴ Robert Filliou, « L'histoire chuchotée de l'art », *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Craig J. Saper, *Networked Art*, London, University of Minneapolis, 2001, p. X-XII.

¹⁶ Roland Barthes, « Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes », dans *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 2, Paris, Seuil, 1992, p. 695.

impersonnelles empruntées à l'univers bureaucratique. Bien que je reprenne à Saper cette référence à Barthes, je l'utiliserai d'une façon très différente. La notion de « recevable » amène l'idée des archives personnelles comme lieu de destination privilégié des matériaux mis en circulation. On pourrait en effet poursuivre la pensée de Barthes en disant : « ce que je ne puis ni lire ni écrire, je le reçois » et je le garde. L'art par correspondance, à l'instar de beaucoup d'autres formes d'art éphémère, a en effet généré des corpus de documents imposants que les artistes ont eux-mêmes constitués, organisés et qu'ils ont conservés à leur domicile ou dans leur atelier, avant de les déposer dans des institutions. Ainsi, Morris et Trasov ont rassemblé des archives des activités d'Image Bank. Entreposées durant de nombreuses années à la Western Front Society parmi les documents administratifs, elles sont transférées en 1992 à la Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. Lewis gardait ses archives à son domicile et vient tout juste de les déposer à la même institution. Le recevable relèverait donc de ce moment où les artistes retirent les matériaux du réseau pour les conserver dans des espaces privés ou transitoires. Il n'est pas à proprement parler de l'ordre de l'archive puisque, comme le rappelle Jacques Derrida dans *Mal d'archive*, l'institutionnalisation est intrinsèque à la notion d'archive. Non seulement elle lui offre une « domiciliation », mais un système, une unité, une cohérence. Elle garantit sa lisibilité et par conséquent, son accessibilité publique¹⁷.

On pourrait dès lors considérer qu'avec le *Great Wall*, Lewis anticipe la question de la « domiciliation » de l'art par correspondance. Il propulse le recevable dans une sphère pleinement publique, de façon permanente. Il lui offre un lieu, une bibliothèque, et un système qui évoque l'univers muséal : des artefacts et des documents préservés et exposés dans des vitrines. Sa proposition semble largement redevable à la section *Musées d'artistes* qu'Harald Szeemann avait organisée à la *documenta 5* en 1972. Elle regroupait cinq œuvres qui prenaient la forme de musées fictifs et avaient un caractère rétrospectif : *La boîte en valise* de Marcel Duchamp, *Le musée en tiroirs* d'Herbert Distel, le *Mouse Museum* de Claes Oldenburg, la *Section publicité* du *Musée d'art moderne Département des Aigles* de Marcel Broodthaers et *l'Armoire pour Arman* de Ben Vautier. Les artistes proposaient, sous une forme souvent ludique, une mise en exposition de leurs réalisations passées (Duchamp, Broodthaers) ou de leurs processus créatifs (Oldenburg, Ben). À l'instar de Lewis, mais selon une acception différente du concept de réseau, Distel constitua dans un meuble de mercerie un musée miniature d'artistes des réseaux internationaux. Contrairement à une croyance générale qui a fait l'économie d'une analyse de cette section, les « musées d'artistes » ne consistaient pas en

17 Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive. Une impression freudienne*, Paris, Galilée, 1995, p. 14.

une critique idéologique des institutions artistiques¹⁸. Ils manifestaient plutôt une volonté de la part des artistes d'étendre leurs champs de compétences, de revendiquer une plus grande responsabilité intellectuelle et davantage de liberté à l'égard de la médiation de leur œuvre et de son inscription dans l'histoire de l'art. Les artistes se faisaient les commissaires de leur propre travail ou, dans le cas de Distel, de celui des autres. Le *Great Wall* semble s'inscrire dans ce type de démarche.

Lewis s'est inspiré d'un tableau du début du XIX^e siècle, *The Artist in His Museum* (1822), autoportrait de Charles Wilson Peale dévoilant le musée d'histoire naturelle qu'il a créé en 1784 à Philadelphie et au développement duquel il consacra sa vie. Dans une longue galerie, les spécimens ornithologiques sont exposés dans des vitrines organisées en rangées horizontales qui courent le long des murs de gauche et du fond. C'est ce dispositif que Lewis reprend pour le *Great Wall*. L'autoportrait de Peale est plus qu'une source d'inspiration. Lewis conservait dans ses archives du projet d'Ottawa une reproduction du tableau qu'il a fait publier à deux reprises à proximité de la photographie du *Great Wall* : en 1979, dans le catalogue *Art & Correspondence From the Western Front*¹⁹, puis dans la publication que la Burnaby Art Gallery lui consacre en 1993²⁰. Il y a de la part de l'artiste une insistance à établir un parallèle entre les œuvres. Deux aspects de l'autoportrait de Peale semblent particulièrement intéressants à cet égard : la dimension mémorielle et l'artiste comme créateur de son propre musée.

Les deux œuvres s'inscrivent dans un processus de deuil, de renoncement à une conception du savoir et d'un rêve démocratique chez Peale, à une conception de l'art et de la culture chez Lewis. S'il dresse en apparence un portrait assez somptueux du musée, le tableau porte les signes de son dépassement scientifique et de l'échec du projet politique que le peintre caressait. Les parties gauche et droite relèvent d'approches scientifiques différentes. À gauche, la conception évolutionniste des espèces et les principes de classification de Linné relèvent du déisme très répandu en Angleterre et aux États-Unis à cette période. Tout en admettant l'existence d'une divinité créatrice, les déistes considèrent que l'homme parviendra à maîtriser la nature grâce à la science et à la technologie. À droite, le squelette d'un mastodonte que Peale et son fils avaient exhumé en 1801 permet d'émettre l'hypothèse de l'extinction des espèces. La présence du mastodonte, bien qu'elle évoque l'un des plus grands succès scientifiques de Peale, indique que la conception du vivant à laquelle répond le musée est déjà datée²¹. De plus, lorsque Peale réalisa cette œuvre, il était sur le point de perdre l'une de ses grandes batailles politiques : transformer son musée en institution d'éducation publique financée par l'État, sur le modèle des musées

18 À l'exception de l'œuvre de Marcel Broodthaers.

19 *Art & Correspondence From the Western Front*, Vancouver, Western Front, 1979, p. 44-45.

20 Glenn Lewis : *Utopiary, Metaphor-est & Bewilderness : Works from 1967-1993*, Burnaby, Burnaby Art Gallery, 1993, p. 62-63.

21 Sur la mémoire et le deuil dans l'œuvre de Peale : Susan Stewart, « Death and Life, in that Order, in the Works of Charles Wilson Peale », dans L. Cooke et P. Wollen (sous la dir.), *Visual Display. Culture Beyond Appearances*, Seattle, Dia Center for the Arts, Bay Press, 1995, p. 30-53.

européens²². Selon une conception très progressiste, il considérait que l'éducation était une mission centrale de l'État démocratique. Malgré toutes ses démarches, Peale ne parvint pas à obtenir de fonds publics et cinq ans après la réalisation du tableau, en 1827, il dut se résoudre à déménager le musée de la State House (Independence Hall) à l'Arcade Building, premier centre commercial des États-Unis, un compromis difficile entre ses idéaux scientifiques et démocratiques et la société de consommation et de divertissement qui se mettait en place.

À l'instar de *The Artist*, *The Great Wall* était une réponse aux transformations importantes de la scène artistique : l'étiollement de l'art par correspondance ; la mutation des réseaux informels et souples en institutions mieux organisées, les centres d'artistes. Au tournant des années 1973 et 1974, l'art par correspondance s'essouffla. Le réseau souffrit de son propre succès. Plusieurs artistes se plaignaient de la trop grande quantité de courrier qu'ils recevaient et de sa qualité très médiocre. Les « compilateurs » se trouvaient face à deux choix difficilement acceptables : se résoudre à exercer une sélection ou intégrer à leurs compilations du matériel de moindre qualité²³. Enfin, la création des premiers centres d'artistes canalisa l'énergie de plusieurs figures centrales. Morris envisage d'ailleurs *a posteriori* l'art par correspondance comme une étape intermédiaire : « My major activities vis-a-vis mail art undertook a major metamorphosis with the development of artist-run spaces. Correspondence seems now like a very nice but transitional stage [...] »²⁴ Cet essoufflement est palpable dans le *Great Wall*. Plusieurs artistes qui avaient pourtant confirmé leur participation et choisi une boîte n'envoyèrent jamais leur contribution²⁵. D'autres ne répondirent pas. Lewis dut faire appel à Morris pour solliciter les artistes²⁶. Malgré leurs efforts, 121 boîtes restèrent vides.

Parallèlement à ce désengagement, les rapports très favorables qui s'étaient établis entre les institutions officielles et les pratiques artistiques expérimentales se détériorèrent. À Vancouver, la scène artistique vit la désintégration de collectifs de production relativement informels, mais soutenus par les institutions officielles, au profit des centres d'artistes qui, malgré leur structure plus permanente et une administration plus développée, n'eurent pas les mêmes appuis officiels. La disparition de l'Intermedia Society en 1972 et la fondation de Western Front l'année suivante sont emblématiques de ce phénomène. La nouvelle structure n'eut toutefois pas le même soutien institutionnel que son prédécesseur. Dès 1975, l'expansion du nombre de centres d'artistes est si importante que le Conseil des arts du Canada n'a déjà plus la capacité financière de soutenir adéquatement leurs activités²⁷. En 1974, la Vancouver Art Gallery annula les séries

²² Sur la pensée politique de Peale : David C. Ward, « Democratic Culture : The Peale Museums, 1784-1850 », dans L. B. Miller, *The Peale Family. Creation of a Legacy 1770-1870*, New York, Abbeville Press, Smithsonian Institution, 1996, p. 261-275.

²³ Dans un entretien avec Anna Banana, Gary Lee Nova explique cette situation : Anna Banana, « Mail Art Canada », dans M. Crane et M. Stofflet (sous la dir.), *Correspondance Art*, op. cit., p. 250. Selon AA Bronson, le programme de bourses de voyage que le Conseil des arts du Canada créa au début des années soixante-dix accentua ce désintérêt, les artistes pouvant désormais se rencontrer plus facilement : AA Bronson, op. cit., p. 33.

²⁴ Michael Morris cité par Michael Crane, « The Spread of Correspondence Art », op. cit., p. 147.

²⁵ C'est le cas pour une trentaine de boîtes.

²⁶ Lettre de Flakey (pseudonyme de Lewis) à Marcel (pseudonyme de Morris), n.d., Morris/Trasov Archive, op. cit., (dossier 32.6, boîte C21).

²⁷ Au cours de l'année financière 1975-1976, le Conseil des arts « gela » son aide aux nouveaux centres d'artistes, tout en continuant à soutenir ceux qui étaient déjà en place. Voir le document *Les centres d'artistes. 1972 à 1992 – vingt ans d'histoire*, document produit par le Service des arts visuels, Conseil des arts du Canada, 1993, pages 2 et 5.

d'événements qu'elle consacrait à la scène parallèle et l'Université de Colombie-Britannique ne renouvela pas les contrats des artistes enseignants qui avaient été affiliés à Intermedia.

Ce nouveau paysage institutionnel est inscrit dans le *Great Wall*. D'une part, de nombreux membres de Western Front ont participé à l'œuvre, le centre d'artistes ayant vraisemblablement servi de plate-forme à Lewis pour mener le projet. D'autre part, plusieurs organismes – bien réels – ont également envoyé une contribution, au même titre que les artistes, les collectifs et les compagnies fictives : le regroupement New Era Social Club ; le centre d'artistes Western Front ; la maison d'édition Talon Books. Divers acteurs du milieu artistique participèrent également : Victor Coleman (sous le pseudonyme de Vic D'or), critique à *artscanada* et fondateur de la maison d'édition Coach House ; Willoughby Sharp, éditeur d'*Avalanche* ; Bill Bisset, responsable de *blewointment*, magazine de poésie concrète et expérimentale créé en 1962 et transformé en maison d'édition en 1967. Mais c'est surtout la porosité entre les pratiques artistiques et administratives dont procède le *Great Wall* qui semble caractéristique de cette période et de ses mutations institutionnelles.

L'ARTISTE EN ADMINISTRATEUR, OU UNE CERTAINE PERMÉABILITÉ DES PRATIQUES INSTITUTIONNELLES ET ARTISTIQUES

Si les programmes du Conseil des arts du Canada et ceux gérés par le gouvernement fédéral (Perspective jeunesse et Projets d'initiatives locales²⁸) permirent de financer un bon nombre de projets (entre autres ceux d'Image Bank), ils obligèrent les organismes qui en bénéficiaient à se structurer sur les modèles administratifs traditionnels, avec un conseil d'administration, un directeur, des employés chargés des différentes tâches journalières – des coordonnateurs, des secrétaires, etc. S'opère indéniablement ici une première institutionnalisation de cette scène artistique expérimentale et informelle, et un glissement des idéaux des contre-institutions et de l'autogestion à des structures plus hiérarchiques. Cette période voit émerger un nouveau type d'artiste, ainsi qu'une porosité étonnante entre les pratiques artistiques et institutionnelles.

Cette implication des artistes dans l'administration eut des conséquences sur leur statut et entraîna une extension importante de leurs champs de compétences. Ils assumaient désormais des tâches qui

²⁸ Ces programmes furent mis en place par le gouvernement Trudeau en 1972 et 1973 pour pallier la crise économique et le chômage. Ils permettaient également une certaine forme de décentralisation culturelle.

étaient traditionnellement dévolues au conservateur de musée, au galeriste ou au critique d'art. Ils prenaient en charge et définissaient les modalités de diffusion de leur travail, puisque leurs nouvelles fonctions et les nouvelles institutions qu'ils avaient créées leur permettaient de signer des communiqués de presse, des catalogues, des articles de revues, des livres d'artistes, d'organiser des expositions, etc.

Lewis est emblématique de cette nouvelle figure. De 1970 à 1972, il siège au conseil d'administration d'Intermedia, et de 1973 à 1976, à celui de la Vancouver Art Gallery. Son implication dans Western Front est importante : en 1974, il crée le volet vidéographique et l'administre durant deux ans ; de 1977 à 1979, il est responsable de la programmation de performance, puis de 1979 à 1987, il supervise l'administration et la coordination générale de l'organisme. Au cours de ce long mandat, il instaure, entre autres, un nouveau programme, *Computer – Integrated Media*. En 1987, il est engagé comme responsable de la section des arts médiatiques au Conseil des arts du Canada, fonction qu'il assumait durant trois ans. Lewis organise régulièrement des expositions et des événements à titre de commissaire : pour n'en mentionner que quelques-uns : en 1970, l'*Intermedia Dome Show* à la Vancouver Art Gallery ; en 1974, le *B.C. Open Art Race* télédiffusé sur la chaîne anglaise de Radio-Canada ; en 1979, l'*Art & Correspondence From the Western Front*. De plus, Lewis joua un rôle important au sein de l'ANNPAC/RACA²⁹ où il promut une figure d'« artiste-administrateur », « manager of his own destiny » et « the emergence of the artist from exile into the palpable world of people, concerns and problems – reminiscent of a time when an artist was an integral and necessary part of the whole society »³⁰.

Outre l'émergence de cette nouvelle figure d'artiste, cette période se caractérise par une porosité étonnante entre les tâches administratives et les pratiques artistiques. Les deux sphères d'activité semblent se contaminer, comme s'il n'y avait plus de véritable distinction entre la création et le travail administratif. Les projets, les thèmes, les personnages, les listes de membres ne circulent pas seulement d'un projet artistique à l'autre, mais, de façon surprenante, des pratiques artistiques aux institutions.

La liste des membres du réseau constitue un exemple intéressant de ce glissement. Après avoir circulé dans différents réseaux d'artistes, elle fut utilisée par *Flash Art*, *Who's who in American Art* et *Who's Who in America*³¹. Si, comme l'explique Ken Friedman³², l'élaboration des listes d'artistes était à l'origine une façon de court-circuiter la mainmise des institutions sur ces informations et leur hégémonie en matière de

diffusion, leur réintégration dans le milieu institutionnel assure aux artistes une forme de contrôle de la dissémination des informations.

Le thème 1984 constitue un autre exemple intéressant de cette perméabilité entre les œuvres et les institutions. À sa création en 1974 par General Idea, Art Metropole articule son programme d'activités et de développement institutionnel autour de l'année 1984. Dans une demande de subvention déposée au Conseil des arts de l'Ontario en avril 1974, l'organisme prévoit, au cours des dix premières années, de constituer une documentation des formes artistiques non traditionnelles et de la déposer en 1984 dans un lieu permanent. Ce programme est justifié uniquement au regard du mythe que les communautés d'artistes ont créé autour de cette date³³.

Les artistes ne se contentent pas de parodier ou de critiquer les institutions de l'extérieur, ils cherchent à s'y inscrire pour en faire de nouveaux usages ; ils tentent de créer leurs propres institutions au sein des systèmes artistiques et culturels existants. Le *Great Wall* semble emblématique de cette complexité. D'une part, les artistes qui y ont participé s'approprient les pratiques administratives ; d'autre part, pour réaliser son œuvre, Lewis a conçu un dispositif qui s'apparente à une forme institutionnelle. Enfin, il a très habilement articulé son projet au programme de commande d'œuvres d'art du ministère des Travaux publics.

Dans le *Great Wall*, plusieurs interventions procèdent d'une appropriation de l'univers administratif et entrepreneurial. Les noms d'entreprises, de compagnies incorporées, d'institutions fictives sont très nombreux. Des papiers à en-tête, des enveloppes, des tampons, des certificats portent les noms de Hoo Hoo Archives, COUM, Gross Entreprises, Fat City School of Finds Arts, Les petits bonbons, etc. De plus, l'organisation et la logistique mises en place par Lewis pour réaliser sa murale s'apparentent à une forme d'activité administrative. L'artiste conçut une série de formulaires et d'imprimés qu'il expédia aux quelque quatre cents membres de la New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver. Ils reprennent l'esthétique des formulaires administratifs, mais l'artiste leur confère un aspect « fait main » qui contredit la rationalité de leur organisation. Les participants investirent ces imprimés plastiquement : ils y apposèrent leurs tampons, réalisèrent des collages, en colorièrent les cases³⁴.

Lewis classa ces formulaires dans un fichier par ordre croissant de numéros de boîte. Pour chacun des artistes qui répondirent à l'appel, il établit également une fiche dactylographiée avec le nom de

29 En français : RACA, Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatifs. En anglais : l'ANNPAC, Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres.

30 Glenn Lewis, « The Value of Parallel Galleries », *Parallelogramme*, vol. 3, n° 2, février 1978, p. 5-6.

31 Sur l'itinéraire de cette liste, voir Ken Friedman, « The Early Days of Mail Art », dans C. Welch (sous la dir.), *Eternal Network. A Mail Art Anthology*, Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 1995, p. 3-16.

32 Ibid.

33 Robert Handforth, demande de subvention au Conseil des arts de l'Ontario, Fonds Art Metropole, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, 30 avril 1974, p. 6. Je remercie Vincent Bonin d'avoir attiré mon attention sur ce document.

34 Archives personnelles de Glenn Lewis.

l'artiste et le numéro de sa boîte, et constitua un deuxième index classé par ordre alphabétique de noms d'artistes. Il dressa aussi une liste dactylographiée reprenant les mêmes informations et le même classement qu'il introduisit ainsi : « The following is a list of names with corresponding box numbers which shows who is cheek to cheek on the border-lines of their safety deposit boxes in the 1984 Wall at the National Science Library, Ottawa, to date »³⁵. Il apparaît assez clairement que l'artiste s'est adonné à un certain plaisir de la liste, du classement, de l'organisation des données.

Ces documents, que Lewis n'a jamais rendus publics, mais qu'il a conservés dans ses archives personnelles, constituent la part cachée de l'œuvre. Ils en font toutefois pleinement partie. L'intégration à la murale de formulaires vierges, dans un compartiment plus petit que les autres, prévu à cet effet, révèle bien le statut que l'artiste leur attribuait. Mais ces documents remplissent également des fonctions de nature administrative, puisqu'ils permettent le bon fonctionnement du projet, sa gestion efficace.

Lewis mena le projet d'Ottawa avec une grande habilité et sut tirer parti du programme gouvernemental. Il bénéficia de la souplesse de cette institution qui était encore relativement jeune et bien plus flexible à l'égard des artistes que la plupart des programmes gouvernementaux d'intégration des œuvres d'art à l'architecture encore en vigueur aujourd'hui. Lewis sut profiter de cette conjoncture favorable, alors que les premiers signes de désengagement des institutions officielles se faisaient déjà sentir. Le programme gouvernemental lui offrait à la fois le soutien financier pour réaliser ce projet et un contexte institutionnel suffisamment souple.

Le ministère des Travaux publics se prévalut du Fine Art Program en 1964, à la demande générale du milieu de l'art³⁶. Il permettait que jusqu'à 1 % du coût total de la construction d'un édifice fédéral soit alloué à des œuvres. Les architectes proposaient les artistes, tandis qu'un comité consultatif nommé pour trois ans entérinait le choix des créateurs, l'emplacement des œuvres et les projets proposés³⁷. Il était prévu d'instaurer une étroite collaboration entre les artistes et les architectes dès la conception du bâtiment, afin que les œuvres ne soient ni plaquées sur l'espace architectural, ni réduites à des éléments décoratifs.

À l'ICIST, les choses ne se passèrent pas de cette façon. Les artistes intégrèrent le processus très tardivement. Lorsqu'ils confièrent la conception du complexe des sciences en 1965 à la firme d'architectes de Toronto, Shore Tilbe Henschel Irwin, les responsables du

CNRC étaient réticents à se prévaloir du programme de commande d'œuvres d'art qui n'était pas encore rodé. Stephen Irwin, l'architecte principal, Earl Helland d'Omniplan Design Group Limited qui conçut le design intérieur et Barry Briscoe, responsable de la signalétique graphique, insistèrent tout au long du projet pour que des œuvres soient intégrées au bâtiment, d'autant plus que le design intérieur se démarquait de l'esthétique courante des bibliothèques de l'époque³⁸. Les architectes aménagèrent des espaces susceptibles de les recevoir. Ils ne reçurent une approbation qu'en 1972, alors que le chantier était commencé depuis un an.

Sept œuvres furent réalisées avec un budget de 120 000 dollars (pour un coût total du bâtiment de 14,9 millions de dollars) : outre le *Great Wall*, *Hanging Waves* de Kubota; *Banners* de Jean Noël; *Prairies* de Douglas Bentham; *Quilted Wall Hanging* de Joyce Wieland; *Elemental Murals* de Michael Hayden et *Plants have feelings* de Robin Mackenzie. La sélection accordait une place importante aux pratiques expérimentales.

La firme d'architectes coordonna la réalisation et l'installation des œuvres. Les modalités de la commande privilégiaient les idées des artistes et les esquisses de projets sans exiger que les problèmes techniques soient résolus à l'avance³⁹. Les œuvres pouvaient donc évoluer en cours de réalisation. À Ottawa, l'un des paris de Lewis était de faire accepter au comité l'idée d'un projet collectif qui se détournait de l'esprit du programme de commander une œuvre à un artiste.

La première proposition que Lewis soumit en 1972 n'énonçait pas le caractère collectif de l'œuvre :

... The intention is to make and or use objects that relate to information found in the Science Library, for example things from the natural world, sand and rocks, star charts, maps, antique instruments, etc., along with objects that I will manufacture probably out of porcelain similar in technique to my past work. I have inserted 365 boxes to correspond with the number of days in the year and will attempt to use the changing seasons and relate it to the information found in the boxes⁴⁰.

Lorsque l'artiste lança son appel à participer sur le réseau de la New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, les architectes et le personnel de la bibliothèque, au lieu de s'inquiéter, s'enthousiasmèrent et demandèrent à collaborer. Une lettre de Wenda Montgomery, secrétaire de l'architecte Irwin, est à cet égard très révélatrice :

35 Ibid.

36 Ce programme fut implanté six ans après celui que le ministère des Transports avait instauré à l'occasion de la construction de l'aéroport Gander et qui se limitait aux chantiers d'aéroports. Il fut supprimé en 1978.

37 Le comité consultatif était composé de l'architecte en chef du ministère des Travaux publics, d'un représentant du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada et du Conseil des arts du Canada, d'un critique d'art, d'un architecte, d'un artiste et d'un membre du public, toutes les provinces canadiennes et la région de la capitale nationale devant être représentées. En 1973, il comptait K.C. Stanley, Mayo Graham, Peter Bell, Jean-Louis Lalonde, Ken Lochhead, Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne, Clifford Wiens et Joan Lowndes.

38 En l'occurrence, les couleurs vives des moquettes, les formes organiques de la signalétique et du mobilier, les éclairages assortis aux teintes de chaque espace. Il ne reste malheureusement aujourd'hui que quelques vestiges du design d'origine.

39 Les artistes devaient garantir que leur œuvre durerait cinq ans seulement.

40 Glenn Lewis, texte de présentation de projet, dossier « National Science Library Fine Art Proposal Shore and Moffat and Partners », Archives du CNRC, Ottawa.

Glenn, your method of participation in the furnishing of the individual boxes for the wall is of interest to us. We understand that these have scientific overtones and N.R.C. have expressed interest in filling several boxes. You also mentioned that we might be able to have one. Please let us know if this is possible⁴¹.

On trouve ainsi dans le *Great Wall* plusieurs interventions du personnel de la bibliothèque, entre autres Jack Brown, bibliothécaire en chef qui supervisa la construction du nouveau bâtiment et collabora avec les architectes, Tom West, chef des services administratifs qui travailla avec Helland à l'aménagement intérieur. Les plombiers engagés sur le chantier réalisèrent une sculpture avec des tuyaux de cuivre dans une esthétique très moderniste; d'autres intégrèrent un morceau de moquette, d'autres encore des fils électriques et des copeaux de bois. Une boîte est transformée en maquette avec deux colonnes de béton et un assortiment de fils électriques. Enfin, des photographies du nouveau bâtiment insérées dans un cube de plexiglas sont dédiées à tous les collaborateurs: «National Science Library. Presented to THE SURVIVORS of the construction period Aug. 10 1971 to Feb. 10 1974 occupied Feb. 11 1974». Cette participation de personnes extérieures à la communauté artistique fut l'une des grandes réussites du *Great Wall*. Elle a permis d'articuler deux communautés, celle des artistes et celle qui s'était créée autour du chantier de la bibliothèque. Aujourd'hui encore, les employés se plaisent à raconter leurs souvenirs ou ceux que leurs prédécesseurs leur ont rapportés à propos de cette œuvre. Tout en réalisant le vœu si cher à cette génération d'artistes de fusion de l'art et de la vie, Lewis inventait de nouvelles façons d'investir les institutions. Morris ne s'y était pas trompé lorsqu'il écrivit en 1978, à propos du *Great Wall*: «The finished mural is the most anarchistic yet democratic and intelligent manipulation of official bureaucracy to date. It mirrors the complex implications of current artist / government interactions.»⁴²

LE « MUSÉE D'ARTISTES » AU TEMPS DE LA « CRITIQUE INSTITUTIONNELLE »

L'art par correspondance, et particulièrement la façon dont il se manifeste dans le *Great Wall*, permet d'envisager d'autres récits de l'épisode de la modernité tardive où se renégocient les rapports entre l'art et les institutions. Dans son célèbre essai publié en 1989, «De l'esthétique d'administration à la critique institutionnelle»⁴³, Benjamin Buchloh envisage l'«esthétique de l'administration» qu'il

41 Wenda Montgomery, lettre à Glenn Lewis, 3 août 1973, archives personnelles de Glenn Lewis.

42 Michael Morris, «New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver», *artscanada*, vol. 35 (avril-mai 1978), p. 43.

43 Benjamin Buchloh, in *L'art conceptuel, une perspective*, Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1989.

44 Il serait beaucoup trop long d'en dresser la liste. Kynaston McShine propose une anthologie d'extraits de critiques du musée par les artistes: «Artists on Museums: An Anthology», dans *The Museum as Muse. Artists Reflect*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1999, p. 200-239.

45 John C. Welchman (sous la dir.), *Institutional Critique and After*, actes de colloque, Southern California Consortium of Art Schools, Zurich, JRP/Ringier, 2006, quatrième de couverture.

46 Articulée autour du thème: «Enquête sur la réalité. Les mondes de l'image aujourd'hui», la *documenta 5* appréhendait l'ensemble de la culture visuelle. Les pratiques artistiques y côtoyaient des productions extra-artistiques comme la propagande, la publicité, le kitsch, l'imagerie religieuse, les jeux d'enfants, etc. Parmi ces textes: Robert Smithson, «Cultural Confinement», dans *documenta 5*, éditions *documenta GmbH/Verglagsgruppe Bertelsmann GmbH/C*, 1972, section 17, p. 74. Ce texte est également reproduit dans *Artforum*, n° 11, Octobre 1972, p. 36. Daniel Buren, «Exposition d'une exposition», dans *documenta 5*, op. cit., section 17, p. 29.

perçoit dans l'art conceptuel des années soixante comme la manifestation d'une «critique institutionnelle», selon une lecture de cette période de l'histoire de l'art qui n'est pas dépourvue d'une dimension téléologique. Cette dimension critique validerait l'«esthétique d'administration», ou bien elle en constituerait l'horizon, l'aboutissement, en quelque sorte. Dans les deux cas, un critère de jugement se profile: les œuvres qui s'approprient l'univers administratif sont pertinentes dans la mesure où elles ouvrent sur une «critique institutionnelle».

Cet essai s'inscrit dans la droite ligne des écrits anti-muséaux que les artistes ont multipliés au tournant des années soixante et soixante-dix: Daniel Buren, Robert Smithson, Hans Haacke, Donald Judd, Michael Asher, l'Art Workers' Coalition, etc.⁴⁴ Il a connu une fortune critique exceptionnelle et a engendré une longue généalogie de textes de théoriciens et d'artistes qui en ont repris la terminologie et bon nombre d'idées. Le colloque organisé en 2006, *Institutional Critique and After*, en témoigne. La notion de «critique institutionnelle» y est considérée comme une catégorie esthétique et historique à part entière: un «movement launched in the late 1960s, redeveloped in the 1980s, and vigorously reoriented in recent years»⁴⁵.

Basée exclusivement sur les artistes états-uniens et européens qui ont joui d'une reconnaissance dans les grands centres artistiques et qui sont intervenus dans les institutions phares de la fin des années soixante et du début des années soixante-dix, l'analyse de Buchloh peut difficilement s'appliquer aux pratiques artistiques issues des périphéries, et donc au contexte canadien. Une autre de ses limites est d'avoir ignoré les recherches de Szeemann qui ont pourtant été largement diffusées dès 1972, avec la *documenta 5*, et qui esquisaient une autre façon de penser les rapports de l'art aux institutions muséales. Cette impasse est d'autant plus surprenante qu'un bon nombre d'écrits d'artistes considérés comme fondateurs de la critique institutionnelle a été publié à l'occasion de la *documenta 5*, en guise de contestation, à l'égard de de la figure du commissaire-auteur et du parti pris anthropologique de l'exposition⁴⁶.

Avec la section *Musées d'artistes*, nous l'avons vu, Szeemann inventait de nouvelles façons d'articuler les prérogatives des artistes et leurs champs d'action de plus en plus élargis à celles du commissaire-auteur, figure toute nouvelle dans le paysage institutionnel de l'époque. De plus, dans le catalogue de la *documenta 5*, il n'avança rien de moins que le temps de la critique des institutions était révolu et que l'art du début des années soixante-dix était un art de musée! «Le rapport de l'artiste au musée va de nouveau de soi et des signes indiquent

déjà que, quand nous aurons nettoyé le musée de son odieuse réputation de lieu consécatoire, il redeviendra, grâce aux œuvres, ce qu'il était»⁴⁷, c'est-à-dire un espace d'expérimentation et de liberté. La position de Szeemann, anachronique dans le contexte des années soixante-dix, est opposée à celle de Buchloh. Le premier voit la fin de la critique institutionnelle là où le deuxième la fait débiter. Le commissaire refuse de réduire le musée à sa fonction consécatoire et légitimante, alors que le théoricien concentre son analyse sur cet aspect de l'institution⁴⁸.

Nourri de culture avant-gardiste, Szeemann semble renouer avec le projet de « musée vivant », dialectique et global qu'Alexander Dorner élaborait au Musée provincial de Hanovre au milieu des années vingt. Refusant la vacuité et la neutralité de l'espace muséal, Dorner réalisait de véritables scénographies qu'il nommait des « tonalités d'être »⁴⁹, dont l'objectif était de restituer le contexte socio-historique des œuvres et de favoriser chez le spectateur une expérience multisensorielle. Il impliquait des artistes contemporains dans la conception et la réalisation de ce programme muséologique. Il commanda à El Lissitzky un environnement destiné à exposer l'art abstrait, le célèbre *Cabinet des abstraits*, et à Moholy-Nagy un espace multisensoriel et multimédia dédié à l'art contemporain, dans un esprit très prospectif. Avec les « musées d'artistes », Szeemann réactualisait ce projet, rappelant que les artistes sont à même de penser des dispositifs de présentation des œuvres qui induisent de nouvelles lectures et interprétations.

Plus encore, à la suite de la *documenta 5* et dans l'esprit des « musées d'artistes », Szeemann formule l'idée d'un « Musée des obsessions » imaginaire, et crée parallèlement une structure administrative réelle, l'« Agence pour le travail intellectuel à la demande au service de la vision d'un Musée des obsessions »⁵⁰. Le Musée des obsessions n'existe que dans la tête de Szeemann et consiste en grande partie en une hygiène intellectuelle : « avoir tous les soirs une nouvelle idée » qu'il n'est nullement nécessaire de matérialiser. Si elle l'est, elle prendra la forme d'une exposition que l'Agence se chargera de réaliser avec l'aide des institutions muséales réelles (musées, kunsthallen, centres d'exposition, biennales, etc.). Les longues descriptions que Szeemann propose de son musée et de son agence ne vont pas sans évoquer les parodies des institutions du Collège de pataphysique (sur lequel il a fait sa thèse de doctorat), les « musées d'artistes », mais aussi les réseaux d'art par correspondance. Comme eux, son Musée et son Agence parodient les institutions, tout en s'y articulant et en générant de nouvelles formes institutionnelles :

47 Harald Szeemann, « Préface du catalogue de *documenta* », dans *Écrire les expositions*, Bruxelles, La lettre volée, 1996, p. 28.

48 En regard de Robert Morris, Buchloh écrit que l'art devient « affaire de définition légale et de validation institutionnelle » parce que l'œuvre donne à voir et à penser les processus de légitimation dont elle est l'objet, qui ne reposent ni sur les qualités visuelles, ni sur les compétences manuelles. Benjamin Buchloh, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

49 C'est exactement ce que fait Szeemann à la *documenta 5*, en proposant une « enquête sur la réalité ».

50 Le nom de l'agence de Szeemann est également traduit de l'allemand de la façon suivante : « Agence pour le travail spirituel à l'étranger au service d'une possible visualisation d'un musée des obsessions ».

J'ai une idée. Je me charge, sous forme de l'Agence pour le travail intellectuel à la demande, de réaliser cette idée. L'Agence crée le mot-clé et le cadre, et je me charge de l'élaboration du concept. À mon tour, je charge l'Agence de l'exécution. L'Agence m'annonce que je suis le seul à entrer en ligne de compte. Je demande à l'Agence quels sont les moyens à disposition. Le département des Finances m'informe que ni moyens ni employés ne peuvent être mis à disposition, tout au moins pour l'heure. Au cours d'éreintantes séances entre l'exécutif, le législatif et les experts financiers, la décision suivante est prise : dans le cas où je me déclarais prêt à réaliser l'idée, les autres respecteraient ma décision et se sentiraient liés. Puisque cette décision m'est en fin de compte transmise par l'Agence (puisque celle-ci, c'est moi), je me charge de la tâche de réaliser mon idée. Dès ce moment tout se passe sans accroc : je décide pour l'Agence et je suis mon propre personnel, jusqu'à ce que débute la phase des préparatifs, dans laquelle on ne peut se passer de l'aide des autres⁵¹.

La dialectique Musée / Agence est une solution alternative, à la fois imaginaire et réelle, au monde institutionnel traditionnel et officiel de l'art par rapport auquel Szeemann souhaite prendre une certaine distance, tout en continuant à y œuvrer.

Le Musée des obsessions ne se réduit pas à une survalorisation apolitique de l'individualité ; il « est éminemment politique », écrit Szeemann⁵², esquissant une filiation intellectuelle entre la notion d'obsession et le célèbre ouvrage de Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe. Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, paru en 1972⁵³. Szeemann met au cœur de son travail muséologique le désir, non comme un état de nature de l'individualité, mais dans le rapport qu'un individu entretient avec la réalité et le monde institutionnel. À la fois imaginaire et réel, privilégiant le positif, le multiple, le flux, le nomadisme, la différence, la prolifération, le Musée des obsessions ne se cantonne pas dans des formes de représentation, mais instaure une dynamique entre la pensée et l'action.

Les idées de Szeemann semblent avoir eu un impact important au Canada. Le commissaire participait d'ailleurs au réseau, son nom et sa requête figurant dans *l'International image exchange directory*⁵⁴. Les signes de son influence sont multiples. Le dispositif du *Great Wall*, nous l'avons vu, présente des affinités avec les « musées d'artistes » de la *documenta 5*. Plusieurs manifestations d'art par correspondance, dont le *Great Wall*, et des organismes qui en sont issus reposent sur une porosité des pratiques artistique et institutionnelle qui évoque le statut

51 Harald Szeemann, « Les machines célibataires. Causes possibles de 1, brouillon », dans *Écrire les expositions*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

52 Harald Szeemann, « Musée des obsessions », *ibid.*, p. 59.

53 Harald Szeemann, « Agence pour le travail intellectuel à la demande au service de la vision d'un Musée des obsessions », *ibid.*, p. 51.

54 *International Image Exchange Directory*, Vancouver, Talonbooks, 1972.

à la fois réel et imaginaire du Musée / Agence de Szeemann. Le livre qu'Art Metropole publie en 1983, *Museums by Artists*, accorde une place de choix à Szeemann⁵⁵. D'une part son titre évoque les « musées d'artistes ». D'autre part, une section est consacrée au commissaire et reproduit deux de ses textes sur le « musée des obsessions »⁵⁶.

Mais c'est surtout dans le débat virulent qui suivit la mise en réseau des galeries parallèles avec la création de l'ANNPAC / RACA en 1976 que la pensée de Szeemann semble avoir joué un rôle important, même si elle n'a pas été directement revendiquée. En 1978, dans un article de la revue *Parallelogramme*, « The Value of Parallel Galleries »⁵⁷, Lewis propose de définir ANNPAC / RACA – qui constitue une étape supplémentaire de l'institutionnalisation de la scène alternative – comme le « Réseau des Musées vivants du Canada ». Dans ce long plaidoyer pour l'amélioration du financement des centres d'artistes, Lewis dénonce la précarité financière des organismes et de leurs employés, les « artistes-administrateurs », et déplore l'iniquité du financement public qui privilégie le patrimoine historique au détriment de la culture vivante. Le Réseau que propose Lewis vise à soulager les artistes des tâches administratives trop lourdes qui les détournent de la création, par un partage des ressources et des moyens :

The Living Museum Network of Canada is a communication tool in the arts ; it provides information where, when and how it is needed through exhibitions, multi-dimensional-interdisciplinary-cross-cultural projects, publications and distribution and sales of products ; it deals with the living heritage as artistic and contemporary issues ; it changes as society changes. As a museum it is the traditional starting point in all its ramifications and variations, and as a network it exists in Parallel Galleries and other centres across the nation, connected by communication systems. This museum would not have a building, a collection or much equipment of its own. It might have an office. It would exist as an association of autonomous artist-run centers as they are already constituted. Properly designed, the Living Museum Network would [...] take most of the administrative load off the artist-administrators in each centre for travelling shows and performances, larger cross-community projects, and the distribution of products and publications⁵⁸.

Bien que sa proposition soit très pragmatique, Lewis réaffirme la filiation de ce nouvel organisme avec le projet artistique du « réseau éternel », jouant encore une fois d'une confusion volontaire entre pratiques institutionnelles et artistiques :

55 AA Bronson et Peggy Gale, *op. cit.* Gale écrit en introduction : « Dans la perspective d'une réflexion sur les "musées par les artistes", Harald Szeemann joue un rôle exceptionnel – à la fois par sa présentation de telles œuvres à la *documenta 5* en 1972, et par le rôle influent qu'il joue au sein de la communauté artistique et muséale européenne. » (p. 11).

56 Harald Szeemann, « Le musée des obsessions : propositions concernant une exposition à l'Académie des beaux-arts de Berlin » et « Le musée des obsessions : propositions pour une *documenta future* », dans AA Bronson et Peggy Gale, *ibid.*, p. 271-281.

57 Glenn Lewis, « The Value of Parallel Galleries », *Parallelogramme*, vol. 3, n° 2 (février 1978), p. 6-12.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

60 AA Bronson, *op. cit.*, p. 36-37.

61 Diana Nemiroff, « Para-Ilè-le », dans Jessica Bradley et Lesley Johnstone (sous la dir.), *Réfractons*, Montréal, Éditions Artexte, Bruxelles, La lettre volée, 1998, p. 199.

62 De plus, la proposition de Lewis est calquée sur le réseau des Musées nationaux du Canada qui recevait la grosse part des budgets fédéraux dédiés à la culture. Lewis créait ainsi son pendant pour la culture vivante, dans le but de revendiquer un meilleur financement.

ANNPAC developed out of the consciousness of an informal network of artists across the country in touch with each other through correspondence, meetings, exhibitions and performances. Even before this, there was a creative network through correspondence, sometimes called "mail art" but which Robert Filliou in France calls the "eternal network" and goes on to say that it has replaced the concept of the "avant-garde". He credits Canadian artists with giving real strength and value to this concept of a network of art and artists. It took off in Canada and has been the mainstay of an international artists' network ever since. Many of these artists were germinal to the establishment of the Parallel Gallery system⁵⁹.

L'usage du terme « musée » dans la proposition de Lewis peut surprendre et sembler antithétique à l'univers des centres d'artistes. Il fut d'ailleurs vivement critiqué par plusieurs protagonistes. Bronson y voit une adhésion trop grande aux modèles bureaucratiques (qu'il associe à « l'éthique protestante du travail ») et à la culture d'État subventionnée⁶⁰. Diana Nemiroff en dira : « On trouve là la tentative terriblement retorse d'institutionnaliser un "réseau éternel", anarchique et décentralisé, par la création d'un siège social. »⁶¹ Mais la notion de musée que Lewis mettait en avant était, me semble-t-il, imbibée de la pensée de Szeemann et de sa dialectique agence / musée. Il n'y avait donc aucun paradoxe à ses yeux à articuler le musée au concept de « réseau éternel »⁶².

À l'instar de Szeemann, Lewis désirait articuler les formes artistiques et institutionnelles, imaginaires et réelles, afin d'inventer un nouveau paysage institutionnel qui se tiendrait à la limite de l'utopie. Intermedia marque l'avènement de ce rêve ; l'ANNPAC / RACA, son déclin. Entre les deux, le *Great Wall* constitue l'une des réalisations qui en incarnent le mieux les idéaux, mais aussi les limites et les paradoxes.

L'auteur remercie Glenn Lewis qui lui a ouvert ses archives personnelles et a généreusement accepté de sonder le passé, Krisztina Laszlo, archiviste à la Belkin Art Gallery, qui l'a aidée à s'orienter dans le fonds Morris/Trasov, Stéphane Lévesque du Conseil national de recherches du Canada qui a facilité l'accès au *Great Wall* et aux archives du CNRC, Anik Glaude et Anne-Marie St-Jean Aubre pour leur aide précieuse à la recherche.

**LES DYNAMIQUES
COLLECTIVES
AU VIDÉOGRAPHE
(1970-1975)**

MARION
FROGER

Dans le catalogue de l'exposition *Canada Trajectories 73* que le Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris a consacré à l'art canadien, Normand Thériault ne manque pas de relever qu'au Canada, « l'histoire des œuvres et des productions d'art ne peut s'écrire sans considérer l'apport des groupes »¹. Il est possible d'en chercher les raisons dans des facteurs circonstanciels : les artistes canadiens n'évolueraient pas au sein d'un « monde de l'art patenté » constitué de commanditaires, d'institutions de reconnaissance et de communautés de réception. Obligés de se donner leur propre structure de production et de diffusion, ils ont dû former des collectifs et établir des réseaux interdisciplinaires pour partager les coûts de leur pratique (qui se démultiplient avec l'arrivée des nouveaux médiums électroniques) et les risques de leur statut (en tant que travailleurs improductifs mal insérés dans le tissu social traditionnel au sein des institutions familiales, religieuses, professionnelles, associatives, etc.). L'émergence de ces regroupements s'éclaire aussi par le contexte politique : le gouvernement est, depuis le rapport Massey-Lévesque déposé en 1951, essentiellement préoccupé par la viabilité des activités artistiques dans un Canada au « marché » culturel restreint. Cette viabilité devient un problème politique de première importance après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. L'adhésion du Canada à la charte de l'Unesco, qui fait des arts un domaine avancé en matière de défense de la démocratie, et la recherche d'une identité culturelle susceptible de renforcer l'existence politique du pays sur une scène internationale de plus en plus déterminante, concourent à imposer l'idée que l'État doit subventionner massivement les activités artistiques. Le Conseil des arts est donc créé en 1957 avec le mandat de « favoriser et de promouvoir l'étude et la diffusion des arts ainsi que la production d'œuvres d'art », non sans déclencher quelques réticences de la part d'artistes canadiens – et surtout québécois –, qui se méfient de la commandite de l'État fédéral.

Au tout début des années 1970, des pourparlers importants ont lieu pour donner à l'artiste un statut social lui permettant d'avoir accès à différents types de concours en matière de financement. Les institutions gouvernementales ne se font évidemment pas la même idée que les artistes sur ce statut, comme en témoignent les entretiens de *Bobo-Z-Arts* (Charles Binamé, *Le vidéographe*, 1971)². Lors de cette même période, le soutien à la création d'infrastructures de production, de diffusion et de conservation ne va pas non plus sans débat : les milieux communautaires revendiquent des fonds pour le développement des arts populaires et remettent en cause le financement accordé aux grosses entreprises du secteur ; les artistes résistent à la professionnalisation de leurs activités conçues selon des modèles peu compatibles avec la dynamique de la création. Cependant, les groupes

apprennent rapidement à parler le langage des politiciens et adoptent des pratiques lobbyistes visant à démontrer que la contribution de l'activité artistique doit entrer en ligne de compte dans le calcul des parts du social, comme l'aurait dit Jacques Rancière. Ils endossent donc la légitimation du financement public de l'art en vertu de ses retombées culturelles, sociales et politiques. C'est la substantifique moelle du discours que les groupes servent aux différents organismes publics susceptibles de les soutenir.

À Vancouver, Toronto ou Montréal, les artistes ne se regroupent pas seulement en fonction de motifs politiques et économiques. Leur réflexion sociale et artistique les fait opter pour un *modus operandi* collectif au chapitre de la production comme de la diffusion, puisqu'ils se dotent d'infrastructures coopératives reposant sur la gratuité et la propriété communautaire de leurs œuvres. C'est dans ce contexte qu'ils apportent un soin particulier à la documentation audiovisuelle non seulement des performances, mais aussi des discussions et des manifestations qui les rassemblent. Ils en captent l'énergie et les signes pour les redistribuer dans le social, tout comme ils tentent, par leurs infrastructures administratives et réseautiques, d'imposer un fonctionnement socio-économique alternatif au « monde de l'art »³.

Ce qui se joue lors de la création du Vidéographe à Montréal en 1971 relève de cette même dynamique. Il s'agit d'une structure qui, au départ, n'est pas destinée à servir les intérêts des groupes d'artistes. Robert Forget, son fondateur, a proposé à l'ONF de constituer un organisme permettant à tous ceux qui en ont le désir – les jeunes, les femmes, les ouvriers, les groupes politiques – de produire un vidéogramme qui leur donne la parole⁴. Cette offre de service n'allait pas sans encadrement, puisque les projets choisis par un comité de programmation étaient soutenus dans les phases d'écriture et de montage, puis récupérés et distribués par l'organisme grâce à son vidéothéâtre ainsi qu'à son service de duplication des bandes pour les besoins communautaires. Le Vidéographe représentait alors la version « coopérative et populaire » de l'ONF, dégagée de la tutelle politique. Robert Forget fut à cette époque un assez fin stratège pour profiter de la vague favorable à l'essor du documentaire social au sein de l'organisme fédéral qui pilotait son programme *Challenge for Change / Société nouvelle*, pour obtenir du financement à même les fonds de l'ONF afin de mettre en place une structure autonome. L'accord ne dura cependant pas longtemps – il prit fin en 1973 –, mais suffisamment pour que Le Vidéographe s'installe durablement dans le milieu montréalais, avec pignon rue Saint-Denis, en jouant plusieurs cartes : celles de l'expérimentation artistique, de la politique

1 *Canada Trajectories 73*, catalogue de l'exposition du Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 14 juin-15 août 1973. Conservatrice : Suzanne Pagé. Sans pagination.

2 Sont entendus : Guido Molinari, Ulysse Comtois, Pierre Lafleur, Yvon Cozic, René Derouin, Gérard Tremblay, Serge Tousignant, Guy Montpetit, Pierre Évart, Peter Gnass, Serge De Laval.

3 Comme l'ont défini George Dickie dans *Art and the Aesthetic : An Institutional Analysis*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1974 et Howard Becker dans *Les Mondes de l'art*, Paris, Flammarion, 1988.

4 La liste des premières vidéos réalisées en 1971 montre clairement la volonté du Vidéographe de donner la parole à ceux qui ne l'ont pas : *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu pour que ça arrive rien qu'à nous autres des affaires de même ?* (Yves Chaput, 1971) dresse un tribunal populaire au sujet des emprisonnements abusifs lors de la Crise d'octobre ; *Des enfants pour le kik* (Jacques W. Benoit, 1971) laisse des jeunes produire leur propre fiction pour parler de leur relation à leurs parents ; *Je suis de Ste-Scho...* (Henri Stadt, 1971) est le portrait d'un homme de Sainte-Scholastique qui doit disparaître devant le prestigieux projet du futur aéroport international ; *Grève Campbell* (C.A.C. Chibougameau, 1971) donne la parole aux ouvriers de l'usine en grève et s'attache à montrer la solidarité de leur communauté ; ainsi que les films dont il sera question plus loin : *Le pois fou* (Fernand Bélanger, 1971) ; *Les hiboux sont-ils mous...* (Pierre Veilleux, 1971) ; *Mass-médias* (Collectif, 1971) ; *Les Knock-outés* (Lyse Gagnon, 1971).

et de l'éducation, comme en témoignent ces productions et surtout les démarches pour trouver des fonds de fonctionnement auprès des organismes gouvernementaux.

Mais qui franchissait les portes de cette nouvelle structure? Des apprentis journalistes tentant de se démarquer par la contre-information (*Mass-Média*, 1971; *Les knock outés*, 1971); des apprentis cinéastes faisant leurs premières armes (Robert Favreau, Roger Cantin, Richard Boutet, Paul Tana, André Mélançon réalisent tous leur premier vidéogramme en 1972/1973); des femmes engagées dans la lutte pour l'amélioration de la condition féminine et des militants de gauche découvrant un nouveau médium (le Groupe d'intervention vidéo se crée en 1975 parmi les vidéastes issus du Vidéographe) et enfin des porte-parole de groupes de différentes natures sensibles aux liens qui s'y tissent, à la vie collective qui s'y mène: Fernand Bélanger filme la jeunesse (*Le pois fou*, 1971); Pierre Monat enregistre les discussions de l'arrière-garde révolutionnaire des années 1960 qui s'interroge sur son rôle ainsi que sur l'engagement politique de la nouvelle génération (*Vive les animaux*, 1971); Claude Bond consigne sur bande les pratiques collectives de création inspirées par le défi de la réinvention du lien, comme celle du Grand Cirque Ordinaire (*Improvision*, 1971); Marcel Fraser et Richard Larose (*Y'a du dehors, dedans*, 1973), Michel Di Torre et Raymond Gervais (*Ce soir on improvise: nouvelle musique au Québec*, 1974) suivent les performances du Quatuor de Jazz libre du Québec alors qu'il tente d'infléchir l'émotion collective générée par l'écoute musicale.

Le vidéogramme, au carrefour de tous ces intérêts divergents, devient cependant essentiel à une dynamique de solidarisation par le projet collectif, caractéristique de cette époque⁵, en permettant la documentation, par l'enregistrement en temps réel, des expériences collectives quelles qu'elles soient (grèves, coopératives, créations), et l'injection, dans les socialités existantes, de la vision des jeunes générations et des artistes du moment. Devant les caméras, les discours de solidarité se font insistants, notamment lorsqu'il s'agit de soutenir les travailleurs en grève. Mais au-delà de ces discours, on tente, dans le milieu artistique plus spécifiquement, de nouvelles expériences relationnelles en travaillant sur le mode de participation que le médium offre à ses acteurs et spectateurs. La vidéographie passe, du reportage alternatif et de la captation, à une fonction plus subtile de documentation des socialités qui tentent de s'inventer devant et avec la caméra.

La scène musicale du Québec joua un rôle d'avant-garde de ce point de vue. Les groupes d'improvisation et d'expérimentation qui se

forment à l'époque font l'objet de plusieurs vidéos⁶. Ils allient à la fois un fonctionnement collectif, une performance publique et une vision sociale de leurs pratiques artistiques. Du coup, il apparaît que l'investissement de la documentation vidéo ne vise pas uniquement la captation à des fins d'archives ou de promotion. Que documente-t-on, en fait? Essentiellement, une expérience relationnelle qui se joue devant les caméras et dont on fait un modèle de sociabilité. Toutes les vidéos de cette époque qui saisissent les pratiques collaboratives, les performances ou les simples discussions des artistes et des intellectuels proposent en fait ce type de modèle. Or les séances de travail d'improvisation musicale sont exemplaires de ce point de vue. Dans *Ce soir on improvise: nouvelle musique au Québec* (Michel Di Torre et Raymond Gervais, 1974) la caméra suit les performances de chaque musicien en cherchant à traduire les liens invisibles entre les instrumentistes. Chacun est-il uniquement focalisé sur le son que produit son instrument ou, au contraire, à l'écoute des sons de l'autre? L'écoute créatrice se présente à la fois comme un moyen de création et une finalité de l'acte créateur: ce qui compte, c'est le degré d'écoute auquel on est parvenu, signalé dans les anticipations dont les musiciens sont capables alors que tout concourt à rendre les développements musicaux imprévisibles⁷. La captation des performances des groupes d'improvisation musicale insiste particulièrement sur cette écoute mutuelle. Elle privilégie les plans serrés sur les musiciens reliés entre eux par des mouvements panoramiques. En l'absence de signes de connivence entre les musiciens, il faut faire dériver l'écoute mutuelle de la concentration de chacun, produire, par le balayage et le montage, des connexions autrement invisibles.

L'époque est aussi à la recherche de nouvelles métaphores communautaires. On pense le lien à l'image d'un courant. L'entente du groupe n'est pas un préalable, elle se produit lors de la performance et fait partie intégrante de ce que l'on doit ressentir à l'écoute de la musique. Dans *Y'a du dehors, dedans*, un musicien du Jazz libre de Québec évoque avec beaucoup de satisfaction la réaction d'un ouvrier de 50 ans qui avait été exposé par hasard à leur musique. L'émotion collective issue de ces improvisations est, espère-t-on, d'une tout autre qualité que celle du concert de musique populaire traditionnelle. Elle doit piquer au vif, sortir les auditeurs du confort de la satisfaction mélodique pour leur transmettre le désir de création et d'invention de soi dans une dynamique de groupe.

Par définition, la plupart des vidéos produites par Le Vidéographe entre 1971 et 1974 sont le fait d'« amateurs »⁸: le rapport à la caméra n'y est pas occulté comme dans les vidéos professionnelles soucieuses

5 On trouve d'ailleurs, dans les archives du Vidéographe, une bande consacrée à différents types d'expérience communautaire qui témoigne de cette dynamique: *Si on s'y mettait... (l'expérience communautaire)* (André Delisle, Michel Légaré, Charles Sénécal, 1973).

6 Voir *Y'a du dehors, dedans* (Marcel Fraser et Richard Larose, 1973); *Ce soir on improvise: nouvelle musique au Québec* (Michel Di Torre et Raymond Gervais, 1974).

7 Dans un article de *CinéJazz*, Jean Préfontaine, saxophoniste du Quatuor du nouveau Jazz libre du Québec, explique que chaque membre joue « solo, tout en écoutant ce que les trois autres musiciens jouent [...]. Notre devise est plutôt chacun pour tous que tous pour un. Archie Shepp aime avoir un fond simple pour mettre en relief ses solos, nous on essaie d'être libre tous ensemble. Quand on est en forme et surtout vers la fin des soirées, on est rendu à un tel degré de cohésion et d'unité qu'on fait des changements contrastés énormes en très peu de temps. Chaque musicien semble deviner ce que les autres vont faire et tout marche ». *CinéJazz*, n° 1 (1968), p. 34. La revue n'a produit qu'un numéro conservé dans les archives nationales du Québec.

8 « Le vidéographe est fondé sur une triple hypothèse 1) de citoyens non professionnels qui ont quelque chose à dire; 2) ce qu'ils ont à dire intéresse un secteur important de la population; 3) un médium audiovisuel économique et facile d'opération permet à ces intentions de devenir réalisations: le vidéo demi-pouce ». Archives du Vidéographe. Document interne. *Années fiscales 1971- 1975*, p. 1.

de la transparence médiatique. On documente l'expérience relationnelle qui se joue avec la caméra, on en conserve les traces au montage. Ce rapport à la caméra – ou aux caméramans – dresse en même temps le portrait relationnel des protagonistes. Dans *Les hiboux s'ont mous* (Pierre Veilleux, 1971), la troupe de jeunes artistes (dont Michel Rivard et Serge Thériault) monte et démonte les décors, répète leur spectacle, discute de leur itinéraire, et affuble le caméraman d'un sobriquet, « Monsieur Godard », qui raille ses prétentions artistiques. On le stigmatise car il est l'oisif du groupe, celui qui ne pense qu'à filmer tandis que les autres travaillent. Mais ces autres semblent nerveux ; ils font leur première tournée provinciale avec l'aide d'un programme de subvention destiné aux jeunes. Ils doivent encore faire leurs preuves, comme artistes, devant des publics un peu incrédules, réunis dans des écoles, des gymnases ou de modestes salles communautaires. La caméra suscite le cabotinage des acteurs et le réalisateur s'attache à capter non pas le spectacle lui-même, dont nous n'aurons que des bribes, mais bien les tensions, connivences et agressivités – dont il fait un peu les frais – qui animent la vie du groupe. Le résultat est ambigu puisqu'il présente à la fois l'utopie propre aux entreprises collectives – produire la communauté de ceux qui la tentent par le projet vidéographique lui-même qui consiste à suivre le groupe –, et son envers, une expérience relationnelle quelque peu artificielle, construite sur un heureux concours de circonstances, soit un programme de subvention, un public bon enfant et un voyage à travers le Québec.

Un autre vidéogramme sur la jeunesse, *Le pois fou* (Fernand Bélanger, 1971), présente une tout autre dynamique relationnelle. Il s'organise aussi autour d'un petit groupe de jeunes qui, dans les premiers plans, se balade sans but apparent, et sans ignorer la caméra, à cheval dans une forêt ; passe un peu de temps en compagnie d'une vieille femme qui leur fredonne des chansons du temps de son enfance ; se mêle aux manifestations de l'heure, se grime pour recevoir, avec Fernand Bélanger, dans les locaux de l'ONF et des mains de Sydney Newman, un prix création-jeunesse, l'Academy Award. Les jeunes attendent de la caméra qu'elle capte le plaisir qu'ils ont à être ensemble. Du coup, les personnes extérieures à cette dynamique de groupe se sentent piégées. La vieille femme s'adresse directement au caméraman pour savoir si l'on rit d'elle avant d'accepter de chanter pour la caméra, les yeux plongeant dans l'objectif. L'occasion d'échanger avec les jeunes qui tiennent cette caméra est finalement trop belle. Celle-ci devient ainsi le prétexte d'une relation improbable, parce que sa présence est la manifestation d'un intérêt que la vieille femme reçoit avec gratitude. Tout autre est la réaction de Sydney Newman, surpris par la mascarade qui se déroule dans son bureau alors qu'il est investi

d'une mission officielle – remettre l'Academy Award à Fernand Bélanger pour son film *Ty-peupe* produit par l'ONF – et qui tente de garder une contenance. On apprend d'ailleurs, en exhumant des archives du Vidéographe des lettres de mise en demeure adressées à Robert Forget, que ce même Sydney Newman a essayé de faire retirer cette séquence du film, allant jusqu'à mettre en balance le soutien de l'ONF au Vidéographe, sous prétexte que cette prise de vue ne respectait aucune règle d'éthique professionnelle.

Si un nouveau rapport de pouvoir s'installe, il se joue bien devant cette caméra, qui n'est plus l'objectif incarnant le tiers qui impose des jeux de sociabilité hiérarchiques entre les générations, les classes ou les sexes. La plupart des vidéogrammes contrastent avec les documentaires ou reportages professionnels sur ce point précis du rapport à la caméra. Devant les caméras des médias officiels, se composer une contenance, policer son langage, tenir son rôle de cadre, de patron, d'intellectuel, de notable, cela allait de soi. Dans les productions du Vidéographe, ces comportements détonnent. C'est très net dans *Mass-Média* (1971), une des premières bandes qui fut tournée dans la foulée des événements d'octobre, pour dénoncer le rôle des médias dans cette crise. La longue interview de Michel Chartrand, qui converse à bâtons rompus, avec la verve qu'on lui connaît et cette façon bien franche d'aller chercher son interlocuteur en multipliant les effets phatiques, rend *a contrario* ridicules et ampoulées les interventions des directeurs de presse qui sont montées en parallèle.

La conversation informelle, entre amis, permet de faire passer – outre le propos dont on débat – un modèle de sociabilité qui touche les « semblables » et nourrit cette impression que les vidéos se tournent dans une intimité dont sont exclues les personnes extérieures au processus de production. C'est très net dans *Vive les animaux* (Pierre Monat, 1973), qui se termine sur un conflit ouvert entre les intellectuels mâles qui mènent les débats et les femmes, passives, muettes, spectatrices, qui, après qu'elles aient finalement pris la parole, sont exclues de la discussion en raison de leur manque d'éthique communicationnelle. C'est un fait qu'à moins d'avoir affaire aux vidéos de femmes sur des problèmes de femmes (*Lesbian Mothers*, Rita Moreira et Norma Pontes, 1972), les interviews ou les discussions se font entre hommes. Dans *Bobo-Z-arts*, on entend les cris des enfants en fond sonore. Pas besoin de se demander où se trouvent les femmes. Les bières sont sur la table, les cigarettes se consomment avec volupté, les chaises à bascule balancent : l'heure est à la détente parce que les femmes, en arrière, s'affairent. C'est en effet l'impression désagréable que finit par produire ce type de vidéo

conversationnelle : il y a ceux qui discutent à loisir, et les autres, à la peine, qui demeurent hors champs.

Le problème – plus général – de l'exclusion du public qui n'a pas participé au processus de production – qui « n'en est pas » – est de taille. Car le Vidéographe nourrit l'ambition de reprendre le fil de la communauté là où l'avaient rompu la dislocation des socialités traditionnelles – rurales, paroissiales –, le choc du développement industriel, l'essor des mass médias et le consumérisme comme seul liant culturel. Par ses projets d'aide à la création et de distribution communautaire, le Vidéographe reposait sur une utopie sociale. Dans un procès-verbal d'une réunion de trois jours à l'aube de son ouverture, Robert Forget décrit le rôle de l'organisme de la manière suivante : « En arriver à faire un travail d'équipe comme je n'en ai pas vécu à date. C'est-à-dire : structure non hiérarchique, mécanisme d'échanges, de communications, d'évaluations collectives »⁹. Si le vidéogramme est l'occasion de vivre ce type d'expérience, il est aussi important qu'il soit vu par un public ; sa circulation doit créer un espace alternatif ; sa projection doit fédérer une communauté. C'est pourquoi, dans les premiers temps du moins, des séances de projection étaient programmées chaque lundi, au vidéothéâtre¹⁰, commentées en direct par les auteurs des vidéos et animées par un directeur de salle. Un service de duplication des cassettes et de diffusion par le truchement des télévisions communautaires¹¹ était mis en place pour que l'accès aux vidéos soit conçu sur le même mode que leur production : usage collectif de ce qui était propriété commune.

La politique de diffusion des bandes s'arrimait à celle de la production. On pensait, peut-être trop naïvement, que l'exemplarité de l'entreprise collective dont témoignait la production des vidéos pouvait toucher un plus large public que celui des seuls participants. Qu'il suffisait, en somme, de faire valoir à la fois l'entreprise collective et son résultat. Rappelons que le Vidéographe est issu d'une réflexion portant sur la fonction sociale du documentaire, qui s'était développée au sein du Groupe de recherche sociale de l'ONF, en 1967¹². Ce groupe avait fait la promotion d'une lutte contre la pauvreté qui s'éloignait de la visée des programmes d'assistance sociale et sensibilisait plutôt la population aux moyens de communication modernes, afin que tous participent « au processus social ambiant »¹³. La voie expérimentale que proposait notamment Maurice Bulbulian, au nom du groupe, consistait à demander aux personnes démunies de « faire [elles]-mêmes un film où [elles] tenteront d'analyser leur situation à leur manière »¹⁴. Pour Bulbulian, chacun devait tirer profit de ce processus : les personnes qui font un film pour la première

9 Procès-verbal d'une réunion du Vidéographe tenue à Piedmont les 21, 22 et 23 juin 1971, p. 4.

10 Le Vidéographe comptabilise 2080 spectateurs pour sa première année d'opération (juillet 1971-31 mars 1972) ; 11 339 pour sa seconde année (1^{er} avril 1972 - 31 mars 1973) ; 4709 la troisième année (1^{er} avril 1973-31 mars 1974). Archives du Vidéographe. Document interne. *Années fiscales 1971-1975*, p. 1.

11 Voir le concept de selectoTV à Belœil, Gatineau, Mont-Laurier durant l'année 1972-1973.

12 Dont les membres étaient Fernand Dansereau, Maurice Bulbulian, Michel Régner (tous cinéastes), Hortense Roy (pour la distribution) et Robert Forget (comme producteur).

13 Maurice Bulbulian, *Deux films sur la guerre à la pauvreté*, Archives de production de l'ONF. Non daté mais vraisemblablement de l'année 1967.

14 *Ibid.*

fois, les cinéastes qui désapprennent à communiquer sur un mode « professionnalisant ». Les films issus de ce groupe ont révélé à leurs membres dans quelle mesure la production vidéo pouvait être un terrain d'expérience sociale des plus stimulantes, en autant que les cinéastes cèdent un peu de leur pouvoir sur les films. C'est au sein de ce groupe que l'on commença aussi à parler des avantages du Portapak pour minimiser le savoir technique nécessaire à la production audiovisuelle – la vidéo permettant de se passer de toute la logistique nécessaire à l'impression de la pellicule – et pour faciliter la reproduction et de fait, la circulation des bandes. À l'ONF, cependant, grâce au programme *Challenge for Change / Société Nouvelle* qui se créa dans la mouvance de cette réflexion sur le rôle de l'audiovisuel communautaire, on choisit plutôt de renforcer la fonction institutionnelle et la tutelle des cinéastes ; Robert Forget prit donc le parti inverse de développer les compétences individuelles en rendant les techniques de production audiovisuelle le plus accessibles possible par l'innovation technique (éditomètre), par l'ouverture des locaux de production 24 heures sur 24 et par l'encadrement logistique des projets. Avec cette entreprise, c'est une dynamique sociale qu'il s'agissait d'enclencher, reposant sur les relations de production entre les auteurs des projets, de provenances variées, et les membres du Vidéographe, puis entre les auteurs membres du Vidéographe eux-mêmes. On attendait, de cette dynamique, qu'elle ait un impact symbolique à travers des productions qui faisaient la promotion de la réalisation de soi au sein d'un collectif de bonnes volontés.

On y croyait parce qu'on le faisait. Mais on le faisait encore entre-soi, au grand dam de la direction du Vidéographe elle-même, qui déplore, dans son bilan de 1975, que sa principale clientèle soit composée d'étudiants issus de la petite et moyenne bourgeoisie. Le projet de démocratisation échoue et, avec lui, le projet communautaire. Une page se tourne alors dans le milieu artistique. L'intérêt communautaire n'est plus si essentiel à la création. On n'y croit plus parce qu'on ne le fait plus. De son côté, le Vidéographe, qui s'incorpore en 1973 à la suite de sa rupture avec l'ONF, se positionnera autrement pour obtenir des fonds des organismes gouvernementaux : il espérera se faire reconnaître comme structure éducative – en tentant une alliance avec l'UQAM toute proche – mais trouvera plutôt sa niche comme centre d'art vidéo en faisant sien le mandat de développer la création artistique de type auteuriste.

*

Au début des années 1970, autour des pratiques vidéographiques non (encore) fixées dans le giron de l'art expérimental, on s'ingéniait à

inventer des lieux permettant l'expérimentation de formes collaboratives de création et l'expérimentation de modalités de socialisation¹⁵. Les efforts de réseautage n'étaient pas uniquement consacrés au développement d'une infrastructure de communication et d'échanges comme nous pouvons aisément le concevoir aujourd'hui avec l'implantation des services offerts par Internet; ils étaient aussi dirigés vers la recherche de formes inédites d'interaction, en lien avec l'évolution décisive des sociabilités qui mobilisait la jeunesse d'alors.

Pour les vidéastes de la première génération qui œuvrait au Vidéo-
graphe, le médium se concevait comme un milieu: la participation des «gens des communautés» à une œuvre collective réinventait l'«agir commun». L'appétence pour la création collective et le fonctionnement coopératif se manifeste dans des documents vidéographiques qui dépassent la simple captation pour relater l'expérience relationnelle de leur fabrication et proposer une utopie à travers les modèles d'interaction qu'ils transmettent. Ces documents avaient pour vertu de renforcer la foi en l'efficacité communautaire de l'entreprise collective.

Cette appétence particulière guide la recherche, caractéristique des années 1970, d'un mode de vie alternatif. Il faut se rappeler l'inquiétude communautaire de ces années-là. Certains évoquaient l'idée d'une dés-appartenance à la terre d'Amérique (nous y vivons comme des étrangers, il n'y a qu'à voir comment nous traitons le paysage...); d'autres voyaient les imaginaires communautaires que les émigrés de toute provenance transportent avec eux (ruraux immigrés en ville ou Italiens de la Main) comme les ressources dérisoires de populations déplacées; d'autres encore s'inquiétaient de la disparition de leur propre imaginaire collectif sous la pression médiatique américaine qui tend à standardiser les cultures de référence. Si bien que le collectif se présente rapidement comme un terrain d'expérimentation. La documentation accumulée par ces regroupements d'artistes et ces coopératives de gestion de ressources produit les traces d'une sociabilité fragilisée par l'abandon des codes anciens d'interaction sociale pour de nouveaux – entre jeunes, entre femmes, entre artistes – qui renverse les hiérarchies, rend les contacts équivoques, et, en transformant le rapport à la caméra, demande des comptes au Tiers (la société) qu'elle représente. Mais cette documentation laisse aussi un goût de cendre, en raison de l'échec relatif de la démocratisation des pratiques et de la diffusion des bandes. La diversité des productions du Vidéo-
graphe était due aux objectifs communautaires de l'organisme. En tombant, ils ont forcé l'institution à construire sa légitimité sur l'existence d'un «milieu» spécifique de l'art vidéo-
graphique. Une autre époque commençait.

¹⁵ Voir aussi, pour ce qui concerne la côte ouest, le document *Intermedia History* (Glenn Lewis, Western Front Video, 1973).

Anne Bénichou teaches art history and theory at the École des arts visuels et médiatiques of l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Her work examines archives, forms related to memory and historical narratives in contemporary art practices and in the institutions that preserve and disseminate them.

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Vincent Bonin is an author and independent curator. From 2000 to 2007, he worked as an archivist at the Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science, and Technology (Montreal). Alongside his research on conceptual art practices of the 1960s and 1970s, he is interested in the social meanings of archives, and in the refashioning of the documentary genre in the field of contemporary art.

Vincent Bonin est auteur et commissaire. De 2000 à 2007, il a œuvré au sein de la fondation Daniel Langlois pour l'art, la science et la technologie (Montréal), à titre d'archiviste. Outre ses recherches sur les pratiques conceptuelles des années 1960 et 1970, il s'intéresse à la dimension sociale des archives, ainsi qu'au genre du documentaire tel qu'il se redéfinit dans le champ de l'art contemporain.

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Primary Information is a New York based non-profit organization devoted to printing artists books, artist writings, out of print publications and editions. Primary Information was founded by James Hoff and Miriam Katzeff to foster intergenerational dialogue as well as to aid in the creation of new publications and editions.

Primary Information, basé à New York, est composé de James Hoff et de Miriam Katzeff. Leur association à but non-lucratif se consacre à l'édition de livres et de textes d'artiste et à la remise en circulation de publications épuisées, dans le but de créer un dialogue entre les générations et d'encourager de nouvelles productions.

Felicity Tayler is an artist, author and information specialist at Artexte (Montreal). She is interested in visual art as a medium of information exchange, in particular the function of artist-initiated publishing in Canada as a communications circuit.

Felicity Tayler est artiste, auteure et spécialiste de l'information à Artexte (Montréal). Elle s'intéresse au champ des arts visuels comme une infrastructure pour transmettre de l'information, et plus particulièrement à la fonction communicationnelle des publications d'artistes au Canada.

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David Tomas est artiste et anthropologue. Ses recherches portent sur l'interface entre l'histoire et l'anthropologie des médias et sur le rapport trans-culturel dans les technologies de l'image. Il explore actuellement cette interface dans le contexte des pratiques conceptuelles et post-conceptuelles. Il est professeur à l'Université du Québec à Montréal.

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Vincent Bonin

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La réussite de ce projet repose sur le soutien des musées et institutions qui nous ont généreusement permis d'accéder aux documents issus de leurs collections (voir la liste des institutions et fonds) et de les reproduire dans le présent ouvrage. Dans ce cadre, je tiens notamment à souligner l'apport d'Amy Marshall-Furness (Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario), Krisztina Lazlo (Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia) et Cyndie Campbell (Musée des beaux-arts du Canada) qui m'ont grandement aidé lors de mes recherches. Les auteurs David Tomas, Anne Bénichou, Kristy A. Holmes, Felicity Tayler, James Hoff, Miriam Katzeff (Primary Information) et Marion Froger se sont prêtés au défi d'interpréter des matériaux souvent fragmentaires afin d'en tirer des analyses cohérentes. Je leur en suis reconnaissant. Sans la rigueur de chacun des membres du personnel de la galerie, ce projet n'aurait pas pu voir le jour. À ce titre, le directeur technique Paul Smith a assuré la bonne marche du montage complexe des deux expositions. La responsable des activités éducatives Maria Polosa m'a secondé au cours de l'organisation d'une table ronde et d'une série de programmes vidéo qui bonifia le contenu de ces volets de *Protocoles documentaires*. La coordonnatrice des expositions Jo-Anne Balcaen a grandement contribué à toutes les étapes de réalisation du projet. Son pragmatisme et ses conseils judicieux en ont fait une précieuse collaboratrice. À l'invitation de Michèle Thériault, directrice de la galerie Leonard et Bina Ellen, j'ai pu établir avec une grande liberté la méthodologie adéquate afin de concevoir *Protocoles documentaires* dans sa dimension réflexive. Nos échanges fructueux depuis les premiers balbutiements du projet ont infléchi la forme pérenne qu'il prend désormais. Je tiens ici à souligner son apport exceptionnel. Les graphistes Raphaël Daudelin, Anouk Pennel et Karine Cossette du Studio Feed ont créé un véhicule ingénieux, pleinement arrimé au matériau complexe qu'il renferme. Enfin, je suis reconnaissant à tous ceux qui depuis 2007, à des degrés divers, ont prêté leur concours à la réalisation de ce projet.

Vincent Bonin

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A Space Gallery
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A Space fonds
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Art Metropole
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Cinémathèque québécoise
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Vidéographe fonds
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Service des archives de l'Université Concordia
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DOCUMENTARY PROTOCOLS
PROTOCOLES DOCUMENTAIRES
(1967-1975)

This publication is the third part of the project *Documentary Protocols* conceived by Vincent Bonin. Developed over a three year period, the project also included two exhibitions organized by the Gallery in 2007 and 2008.

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VIEW OF THE OFFICE OF N.E. THING CO.'S
PRESIDENT (IAIN BAXTER) DURING THE
EXHIBITION "THE N.E. THING COMPANY LIMITED,"
NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA, 1969
Polaroid print
Courtesy of the National Gallery
of Canada, Library and Archives,
Ottawa

VUE DU BUREAU DU PRÉSIDENT (IAIN BAXTER)
LORS DE L'EXPOSITION « LA COMPAGNIE
N.E. THING », MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS
DU CANADA, 1969
Épreuve polaroid
Avec l'aimable permission du Musée
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In the mid-1960s, Canadian artists suffered from cultural isolation as museums were indifferent to their work and the international art market seemed beyond reach. Artists made up for this state of exclusion by creating alternative spaces in which they could present experimental work and offer services to members of their communities. *Documentary Protocols (1967-1975)* addresses a historical moment in which the investment of the concept of information by artists converged with the role of administrator they bestowed upon themselves. The historical trajectory of these self-managed organizations can now be observed in their archival fonds, where the results of partially realized utopias exist alongside material evidence of the artists' labour. Following the decompartmentalization characterizing the period, the editorial structure of this publication provides equal visibility both to the sampling of documents and to the case studies based on the close reading of these items.

Au milieu des années 1960, les artistes canadiens souffrent d'un isolement culturel causé par l'indifférence des musées à leur égard et l'inaccessibilité du marché de l'art international. Ils pallient cette exclusion en créant des espaces alternatifs où ils peuvent présenter un travail de nature expérimentale et offrir des services aux membres de leurs communautés. *Protocoles documentaires (1967-1975)* tente de cerner les enjeux d'une convergence exceptionnelle entre l'investissement du concept d'information par les artistes et la fonction d'administrateur qu'ils s'octroient alors. La trajectoire historique de ces structures autogérées est désormais perceptible au sein de leurs fonds d'archives. Ceux-ci inscrivent les retombées d'utopies partiellement réalisées parmi les traces matérielles du travail des artistes. Dans la foulée des stratégies de décloisonnement de l'époque, le découpage éditorial de cette publication donne la même visibilité à un échantillon de documents issus de divers fonds d'archives et aux études de cas basées sur la lecture rapprochée de ces matériaux.